

# KIRIJI

Wale Ogunyemi



**AUP**  
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# KÍRÌJÌ

an historic drama on  
Ekiti Parapo War in the Nineteenth Century

WALE OGUNYEMI



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WALE OGUNYEMI



## KIRIJI WAR 1877-1886

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

FOR THE Yoruba who live mostly in the south western part of Nigeria, the nineteenth century was a period of great upheavals and many changes. *Kiriji*, the last major war of the century, was the culmination of the many strains and stresses to which our country was subjected during that period. The first important event of the century which triggered off the crisis was the collapse of the Old Oyo empire, situated largely in the northern part of the country. Its fall, due to its own internal weaknesses and the onslaught of the Fulani, who had established a base at Ilorin not far from its capital at Oyo-Ile, posed many problems for the Yoruba people. In particular, this collapse removed the one power whose military might could check aggression, especially continued Fulani aggression and whose prestige and authority could guarantee some peace and stability among the various Yoruba subgroups—Oyo, Ife, Ijesa, Egba, Ekiti, Ijebu, etc.

Many Yoruba towns were therefore destroyed or deserted and Fulani pressure increased, particularly on the northern part of the country. Many of the inhabitants migrated southwards to Ibadan, Ijaye and modern Oyo in the late 1830s. This migration, in turn, contributed to the destruction in the south of older established towns of the Egba and the Owu subgroups, who themselves had to migrate to Abeokuta. In the absence of a dominant power in the country, and because of the constant need to check Fulani aggression, military power became the most important asset for survival and for leadership of the Yoruba people. Each settlement therefore modified its con-



stitution in such a way as to increase its military power. Ibadan, in fact started off primarily as a military settlement for, unhampered by the traditions of the ordinary Yoruba town, it was best able to muster its resources to this end and played the significant role in containing Fulani southward movement at Osogbo (c. 1840), and a few years later put an end to their eastern expansion into the Ekiti country.

These successes in turn increased Ibadan's military might and prestige and made it more difficult to contain its growing power within the limited objective of keeping the Fulani at bay. With the realisation also of the political and economic advantages which military successes could bring, Ibadan embarked on its own expansionist programme to establish its own sphere of influence within the Yoruba country.

First in the 1850s, and more blatantly in the 1870s under its aggressive ruler Aarẹ Latosa, and his lieutenants, Osungbekun, Ajayi Ogboriefon, Iyapo, Ilori, it conquered many Ekiti towns such as Ijero, Otun, Ara, Imesi, Ido, and brought the Ijesa under subjugation. Indeed one of its most notable military achievements was the conquest of Ilesa the capital of the Ijesa kingdom in 1871. In order to consolidate its hold on conquered territories, Ibadan devised an imperial system whereby its accredited representatives the Ajele, ruled on its behalf. With Ibadan's increasing successes, these Ajele became corrupt and high handed. They demanded exorbitant tribute and treated the inhabitants of the towns under their control with disdain.

It was this oppressive government that spurred the Ekiti and the Ijesa to revolt in 1871. However, lack of unity and the defection of Ogedemgbe of Ilesa a political opportunist, who felt he could make a private bargain with Latosa of Ibadan, led to its initial failure. Later, at the instigation of young Fabunmi of the Ekiti town of Imesi-Ile, the Ekiti successfully massacred the Ibadan representatives (c 1877-1878). Subsequently many Ekiti and Ijesa leaders with the support of other rulers, formed a confederation known as Ekitiparapo and declared their independence of the Ibadan. Thus began the KIRIJI WAR which was to last till 1886. The reverberations of the new cannons introduced into the warfare by the



Ekitiparapo—KII RII JIII!—gave its name to the theatre of war—the hills of KIRIJI, the gateway to the Ekiti country.

But KIRIJI has a significance far beyond the recounting of the war exploits of the Ekitiparapo and the Ibadan. The actual fighting which lasted for nine years witnessed many innovations such as the introduction of new weapons and complicated military planning. At the beginning of the century, the traditional weapons—bows and arrows, spears, swords etc—were the only arms in use, but by the time of the outbreak of the KIRIJI WAR, imported firearms were assuming major importance in Yoruba warfare. First to be introduced were the short and long barrelled muskets—these were later followed by breech loading rifles.

During the KIRIJI WAR itself, in 1881, the Ekitiparapo succeeded through the help of their Lagos compatriots in obtaining cartridges and schneider rifles which are long-range, quick-firing and more accurate weapons. Their temporary monopoly of these arms gave them an edge over the Ibadan for a while. With the introduction of these weapons, new strategies, new tactics and new fighting techniques had to be mastered. Formal military training also became mandatory and during the KIRIJI WAR Ekitiparapo compatriots in Lagos came down to the camps to train their countrymen how to use the new weapons.

Military innovation in the nineteenth century was not limited to the introduction of firearms and new fighting techniques. The constant fighting which prolonged state of warfare was a characteristic of the last century also produced a new kind of leadership which was essentially military and which tended to supercede the traditional type of civilian leadership. Under the new leadership, the basis for attainment of political power shifted from the hereditary qualification of birth to that of military ability. This new system was best exemplified in Ibadan which, except for two religious titles, discarded the hereditary factor and recruited its leadership from many parts of the Yoruba country. Indeed, most of the distinguished military leaders of the period had their training in either Ibadan or in Ilorin, the seat of its chief rival. It was this type of leadership



that took control of the Kiriji War on both sides. Latosa, Osungbekun, and Ajayi Ogboriefon fought on the Ibadan side—while Fabunmi (from Imesi Ile), Ogedemgbe (Ilesa), Olugbosun (Oye), Arimoro (Ilesa), and Ogunmodede (Ilesa), led the Ekitiparapo forces. The power enjoyed by these Ekitiparapo leaders is evidenced by the constant consultations which the traditional rulers—the Ore of Otun, Ajero of Ijero, Olojudo of Ido, and others had to have with them before they act.

But the most interesting aspect of the KIRIJI WAR for Yoruba history is the way the political problems of the country in the nineteenth century were mirrored in it. Its study provides a good insight into the nature of Yoruba politics during that period and an understanding of some of the strains and stresses of Yoruba society today.

The war involved many other states who never really accepted the leadership of Ibadan which they considered an “upstart” settlement. The attempt by these powers to maintain the balance of power within the Yoruba country caused a major war (the Ijaye War, 1860—1865), which led to the liquidation of Ijaye, Ibadan’s foremost Oyo-Yoruba rival, and provided the opportunity for the KIRIJI WAR. For it was the outbreak of hostilities between the Egba and the Ibadan in 1876-7 which gave the Ekitiparapo the opportunity to revolt, and prevented the Ibadan from crushing the rebellion immediately.

As the KIRIJI WAR spread, it came to provide a focal point for hostilities against Ibadan by all those forces (the Ijebu, the Egba, the Ife, the Ilorin under Fulani domination) which had become uneasy and anxious about their own survival because of Ibadan’s growing power. They now formed an alliance with the Ekitiparapo and made it impossible for the Ibadan to concentrate their efforts against them. Consequently KIRIJI attracted many other wars in its wake: the Egba and the Ijebu raided Ibadan territory and blockaded the passage of military supplies through their country to Ibadan; the Ilorin attacked Ofa, an Ibadan ally; the Ife with contingents from the Ijebu and the Ekitiparapo declared war on their pro-Ibadan neighbours of Modakeke. Military units from these different



theatres of war (such as Lasebikan and his men from Ilorin) came to KIRIJI to fight on the side of the Ekitiparapo while the latter also sent contingents to their allies. One other group which featured prominently in the war was made up largely of Yoruba repatriates from overseas slavery, who had settled in Lagos. They took common cause with their country-men in the interior. In particular, the Ekiti and the Ijesa among them formed the Ekitiparapo Association, which provided arms and military expertise to the Ekitiparapo forces.

In the actual warfare, there was no victor, no vanquished apparently because both sides were evenly matched. The Ibadan had the superiority in numbers, while the Ekiti had superior military equipments. The war therefore ended in a stalemate, and in the subsequent peace negotiations, fundamental questions relating to issues of peace and war in the Yoruba country were raised. The Ekitiparapo and their allies wanted peace, but it was obvious that Ibadan could not be conquered in spite of the disunity in its leadership. It was also quite clear that there was no power strong enough in the Yoruba country to guarantee a permanent peace. The Alaafin, who should have succeeded to the power and authority of his predecessors of the Old Oyo empire, did more or less whatever the Ibadan told him to do. Attempts at intervention by other African rulers, like the Emir of Gwandu and Masaba of Nupe, were unsuccessful.

It was quite clear that only strong outside intervention could bring peace, but this was lacking. Well-meaning attempts by the Anglican Mission in the person of Reverend Wood in 1881 and 1885 failed, partly because these efforts were not backed by the required force and partly because neither side was willing to compromise.

However, the prolonged stalemate which ensued; the difficulties experienced by Ibadan at home; the death of their leader, Latosa, in 1885; the vested interest of the British Government in Lagos in wanting to bring the war to an end in order to promote colonial trade; all these were powerful factors which eventually paved the way for peace. Under the terms of the peace treaty, Ekitiparapo independence was



guaranteed, but the border towns, which they claimed belonged to them, were to be retained by the Ibadan with their inhabitants having the option of leaving and joining their Ekitiparapo brothers.

However, the downing of arms at KIRIJI did not solve all the political problems of the Yoruba country; even the peace terms did not meet with the full approval of either side and this dissatisfaction persists till today—as evidenced by the numerous boundary disputes which still abound in these border towns. Indeed, the two sides initially only withdrew a few miles from KIRIJI and for a long time viewed each other's activities with great suspicion. It wasn't until 1893 that the Ibadan forces were persuaded to return home.

Furthermore, there was no formal peace treaty with the secondary in the combatants. Ofa was destroyed by the Ilorin allies of the Ekitiparapo; the military forces at Ife could not be disbanded; and it was not until the bombardment of their town in 1892 that the Ijebu actually allowed the Ibadan free passage through their country. What really saved the situation and prevented a new outbreak of warfare were the strong desire of the ordinary people for peace, and the successful exploitation of the situation by the British to expand their rule over the whole country.

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## THE CHARACTERS

### Ekitiparapo

FABUNMI	— an Ekiti War Chief who later becomes a General
OGUNMQDEDE	— an Ijesa War Chief
OGEDEMGBE	— the Commander-in-Chief of Ekitiparapo forces
OLUGBOSUN	— an Ekiti War Chief
ARIMQRO	— an Ekiti War Chief
LEJOFI	— the Chief of Ara Town
AWOYEMI	— a citizen of Ara Town
AYAWOYEMI	— his wife
OMOWOYEMI	— their child
DEJI OJIJOGUN	— King of Akure
OLOJUDO	— King of Ido
ORE	— King of Otun
AJERO	— King of Ijero
DERIN	— King-elect of the Ifes
QLOJA OKE	— King of Imesi
IYAMI I	— an old woman. She is also Iyami III
FALOLA	— Fabunmi's wife
IYAMI II )	— witches
IYAMI III )	
FIRST BOY	— Qloja Oke's son
SECOND BOY	— his friend
AMI	— an Ekiti spy and signaller
LASEBIKAN	— an Ilorin War Chief
KARA	— Balogun (General) of the Ilorin forces.
AWORO	— Priest of the gods.
GIRL I )	— messengers from Igbajo to Ilesa.
GIRL II )	

### Ibadan

AARE LATOSA	— Balogun or Commander-in-Chief of Ibadan
AJAYI OGBORIEFON	— the Leader of Ibadan Army



QŞUNGBEKUN	—	an Ibadan War Chief, who later becomes a Leader.
QTUN	—	an Ibadan War Chief
OSI	—	an Ibadan War Chief
MQGAJI	—	an Ibadan War Chief, representing sons from a noble house in Ibadan
FAMODUN	—	King of Igbajo
ESENI	—	his Attendant
LALURU	—	his Attendant
FAYIN	—	an Igbajo warrior
OWEWENIYE	—	King-elect of Ijesa
AJAYI )		
OSHUNTOKI )	—	Advisers to Latosa
FAJIMI )		
FAJIBI )		
IYAABEJI	—	a mother of twins
ALORE	—	an Ibadan spy and signaller
OYEPETU	—	an Ibadan political agent
IRANŞE I)		
IRANŞE II)	—	Oyepetu's slave errand boys
IRANŞE III)		
MESSENGER I)		
MESSENGER II)	—	Ibadan's Messengers to Imesi
MESSENGER III)		
FOUR MEN	—	Ijesa citizens
<b>From Lagos</b>		
ALFRED MOLONEY	—	Governor and Administrator of the Queen's Colony of Lagos
REVEREND J. B. WOOD	—	Administrator in the Colony Office in Lagos.
REVEREND SAMUEL JOHNSON	—	a clerk in Holy Orders.
REVEREND CHARLES PHILLIPS	—	a clerk in Holy Orders
GUARD	—	Orderly to Reverend Wood
Palmwine Seller, Warriors, Torch Bearers, Market People, Attendants, Drummers and Towns People.		

## ACT 1

### WARS, STRIFE AND AGONY

#### Scene 1: The Bleak Beginning 1870

*An arrangement of platforms with four steps show faintly up-stage centre. The moon shines. There is a mournful chirping of crickets. The people of Ara come in: men, women, old and young with clay oil lamps burning feebly in their hands. They murmur unpleasantries as they enter. One of the women, AYAWO-YEMI, has a baby strapped to her back. Soon, FABUNMI, a tall slim figure, runs in with two other men bearing burning torches.*

*Ara People:* Fabunmi Abe!!

*Fabunmi:* If Ibadan war boys have the power to seize the world, they will cripple the nation in the name of oppression and dwarf all who refuse to be oppressed. That is why you and I, sons and daughters of Ekiti, must unite to free our land from the over-ambitious Ibadan warriors who wreck another man's house to mend their own.

*Ara People:* We are ready!

*Fabunmi:* They are fast closing in on us and unless we wake up and fight them, our elderly ones will do nothing but fold their arms in fear like a monkey waiting to be taken to the market for sale. The Ibadan war boys have, by force of arms, seized many Ekiti towns. Now we must not allow this to continue. I want you to know that once a man grants the mote too much access to his eye . . .

*Ara People:* . . . It blinds him for ever.

*Fabunmi:* That is why we must shake them off, and now!



*Ara People:* Yes!

*Fabunmi:* Your Chief, Lejofi, is now being lured into allying himself with them.

*Ara People:* What!

*Fabunmi:* They may succeed, I am telling you, because he will be as helpless as a lone fly amongst giant spiders where they sit to convince him. And once they win him over, Ara, your beautiful town, will be doomed for ever. Is that what you want?

*Ara People:* No!

*Fabunmi:* Do you want Latosa to drive you off your land?

*Ara People:* No!

*Fabunmi:* Then, you must resist any attempt by them to trick you. They may come with money, goods and other valuable things to bribe you. They are noted for that. Never accept any gifts, for money is nothing where prestige is lacking.

*Ara People:* Hmmmm!

*Fabunmi:* Wait here for your Chief. But for your children's sake, watch him closely for we do not wait until the frog jumps into our cooking pot before we cry out 'shoo' Watch him.

*Ara People:* Long live Fabunmi! Heccccc!

*FABUNMI leaves with the two men bearing the torches, ARA PEOPLE break into a song.*

*Solo:* Ará ẹ má dalẹ yí.

*Ara (People), do not betray this land.*

*Chorus:* Siye, siyè,

*Children of our mothers,*

*Solo:* È má dalẹ yí.

*Do not betray this land.*

*Chorus:* Siye,

*Children of our mothers,*

*Solo:* Ìbàdán kó wa ní'kẹ̀rù

*The Ibadan put us into slavery.*

*Chorus:* Siye,

*Solo:* Ìbàdán dagi bèèyàn mi.

*The Ibadan treated my people badly.*

*Chorus:* Siye,

*Solo:* A sì n' wá ìràpadà ré.

*But now, we want freedom.*

*Chorus:* Siye, siyè,

*Children of our mothers,*

*Solo:* È má dalẹ̀ yí . . . .

*Do not betray this land . . . .*

*Awoyemi:* Sit down everybody. Settle down.

*They settle down in groups round their clay oil lamps like a flock of vultures in dreary weather. They start humming a dirge.*

This is a wicked dark night, frightening. How it will dawn, and whether it will in fact dawn, no one knows, except the maker of the night. When the antelope, that harmless animal of beauty, is confronted by a jury of four, comprising the restless hyena, the juggling jagua, the spotted tiger and, at the head of them all, that roving master of the forest—the lion, the antelope does nothing, but bows his head to them in fear; does what they direct and follows the way they lead. That is the state we should safely assume our chief is in Latosa's palace. Should we allow him to sell us to them?

*Ara People:* No!

*Awoyemi:* Or should we allow ourselves to be bought?

*Ara People:* No!

*Awoyemi:* This night, pregnant with fear, must be a decisive one for us all if we would maintain the freedom held by our forefathers. Poor night, poor moon, bright stars, I dread you.

*The Ara people again hum the dirge. Soon, Lejofi, with a torch bearer comes on stage through the upper ramp. The Ara people stop singing and rise.*

*Lejòfi:* Relax everybody. A son relaxes while listening to a moon-light tale. (*The Ara people sit.*) The journey was



rough, the meeting was bad and the message—very unpleasant.

*Ara People:* Hmmm!

*Lejòfi:* The Ibadan made many promises of help to us. First, to help fight the Ilorin Fulani who have constituted a threat to Ekiti freedom. And secondly, after it shall have been done, to prevent a resurgence of Fulani power. But are they sincere?

*Ara People:* No!

*Lejòfi:* Is this not an attempt to put us under their feet to be crushed a second time?

*Ara People:* It is, it is!

*Lejòfi:* They've forced Ogedemgbe, that great fighter, to open the gates of Ilesa to them and have assumed full control there.

*Ara People:* What!?

*Lejòfi:* Ogedemgbe now is in hiding for he saw that their promise not to sack the town was only a bundle of lies. Know, my people, that when a man elects to work on your farm for no reward whatsoever . . . .

*Ara People:* He has something to gain!

*Lejòfi:* If he's not after selling your crops behind your back . . . .

*Ara People:* He takes them home to feed his family.

*Lejòfi:* That is why I, Lejofi, refused bluntly and sincerely too to be used. Latosa was mad with me and threatened to fall on us. They are mightier and you know what that means. Should we then rest our chin on our palms and let their restless war boys seize our land before we stamp the ground?

*Ara People:* No . . . . !

*Lejòfi:* I will not let that happen while I'm alive, for death is better than the shame of defeat. Therefore, let us shame them. Let us shame their might by leaving this town as a desolate city of ghosts. Two ways are open to you, my people. Do you want to be slaves for ever?

*Ara People:* No!

*Lejòfi:* It is hard to die, but there is joy in death and in dying

you live again . . . . Let someone pick up his sword and run it through me for I have no more wish to live in this world of strife and unending feud. Take up a sword someone and finish me! Or give me a dagger and I'll do it myself.

*There is silence.*

*Awoyemi: (Draws a dagger and moves towards LEJOFI) Here is a dagger, sharp. I've killed so many with it in battle, but I've never seen it carve its own handle in spite of its sharpness. Let me see it carve its own handle now. Let us see how a man extinguishes himself from the face of the earth. Teach us how. Show the example.*

*LEJOFI stretches his hand to take the dagger. AWOYEMI moves more towards him, but instead of handing the dagger over to Lejòfi, he stares at him.*

*Lejòfi: Bring it and I'll show you how.*

*Awoyemi: Take it.*

*Lejòfi: Closer.*

*Awoyemi: Take it . . . . !*

*Instead of giving the dagger to Lejofì, AWOYEMI thrusts it into his own heart and falls.*

*Ara People: Haaaaaa!*

*Ara People burst into tears.*

*Ayawoyemi: My husband! Let me see death!*

*AYAWOYEMI runs to Awoyemi, removes the dagger and stabs herself. She falls face downwards on AWOYEMI. Groans rend the air as the people kill themselves one by one and their clay oil lamps go out one by one with them.*

*Lejòfi: Latosa! See what you've forced us to do. You made us meat for the hungry vultures. May you never die where*

you will find a pillow! We shall leave you nothing to plunder, nothing to gain!

*He goes to the dead couple, removes the dagger. Climbs the ramp and stabs the torch bearer. You coward!*

*Before the torch bearer slumps to the ground, LEJOFI grabs the burning torch and hastily disappears into the wings.*

*As I burn down our ancestors' homes, so will your house be razed to the ground, Latosa, and that of your children's children!*

*There is a glow of fire which grows in the stillness of the night as many houses burn.*

*Lejòfi: Haaaaaaaah!*

### *Blackout*

## **Scene 2: The Misty Morning**

*Dawn breaks on the tragedy of the previous night revealing the corpses of the Ara people. The silence of death is broken by war cries of the Ibadan warriors.*

*Ibadan Warriors: Tòlòmọ kàn ló sòrò,*

*He who has only a child has cause to fear (because he will lose it during this campaign),*

*Konko làwá sọjú!*

*For we are all merciless*

*Tòlòmọ kàn ló sòrò,*

*He who has only a child has cause to fear,*

*Konko làwá sọjú!*

*For we are all merciless!*

*LATOSA, OYEPETU, OTUN, OSI and OGBORIEFON run onto the stage heavily armed. Other warriors rush onto the stage from different directions with their weapons poised for action.*



*Latosa: (Laughs)* They are all dead before the arrival of Death.

Fools! And their chief burnt himself alive, the coward!

*Ogboriẹfọn: (Who has been walking among the dead sees the child on the dead mother's back.)* This is still alive!

*Latosa:* Bring it to me here. I knew they could not all be dead. (*OGBORIEFON cruelly pulls the baby from the mother's back.*) Male or female?

*Ogboriẹfọn:* Male!

*Latosa: (Takes the baby)* I shall kill him with my own sword so he may not grow to avenge his people on my children! Will your swords remain bloodless in spite of their cowardice? (*The warriors begin to run their swords through the dead bodies.*)

I, Momoh Latosa, Aare Ona Kakanfo by right, shall thrive, even in the face of strong opposition. Otun!

*Otun:* Here, Momoh!

*Latosa:* See that you locate that faceless, ugly brute, Ogedemgbe, and bring him to me once again in Ibadan. This time, he shall not be defaced, he shall be sacrificed to the gods. And you, Osi, go to Ilesa and tell them that I, Latosa the mighty, will send them Oweweniye, a king to rule their land. I put the Ekiti kingdom in your charge. Control them, elect your Ajele, who will supervise whatever tribute they must bring to me in Ibadan. Use your initiative in handling any opposition and deal ruthlessly with those who might stir up trouble. Those Ilorin idiots must be brought to their senses.

*Ibadan Warriors:* Long live Latosa the invincible!

*Ogboriẹfọn:* Muso! Muso! Muso!

*Ibadan Warriors:* Muso!!!

*LATOSA leaves carrying the child.*

*Otun: (Shaking hands with AJAYI OGBORIEFON.)* Good luck, Ajayi, and a happy stay in Ekiti.

*Ogboriẹfọn:* Thank you, Otun. And happy coronation. (*Otun and Osi leave.*) Congratulations my men, for having all Ekiti towns in our grip as far as to Igbajo, Ada, Iresi and Otan, those formidable towns. Oyepetu!

*Oyepetu:* Your honour.

*Ogboriẹfọn:* I elect you as an Ajele—a superintendent in Ekiti country. And you in turn will name others you know will cooperate with you as lieutenants: supervising, seeing that tributes are paid by the Ekiti people promptly and truly to my lord in Ibadan. Take full control, for we are now the masters.

*Oyepetu:* Muso, muso, muso!

*Ogboriẹfọn:* No! Say long live Ajayi Ogboriẹfọn!

*Ibadan Warriors:* Long live Ajayi Ogboriẹfọn! Muso!!!

*As Ajayi Ogboriẹfọn leaves, the warriors break into a war song until night falls.*

### Scene 3: Inordinate Ambition

*Few days later. Below the ramps are gathered some people. When lights come on the stage, Osi and Otun enter with Oweweniye and some Ibadan warriors. The townspeople who have been murmuring fall silent. Otun holds a crown wrapped in a cloth.*

*Osi:* People of Ijesaland, chiefs and warriors, I bring greetings from Aare Latosa and from the Baale of Ibadan and all the war chiefs. They wish you well and admire your timely surrender. But as you all know, a city without a king is not a good city. Therefore, we shall now give you someone who will take care of you and your homesteads. We are not forcing him on you, mind you, but it is the cow that ate our yam seedlings who says we should curse the cowherd.

*A Man:* Osi, who is the cow and who is the cowherd?

*Osi:* It is your ruler, Odigbadigba, who unfortunately expired that says we should give you a new king. Odigbadigba's crown will then, this day, be given to a worthier man of valour. Meet your King, Oweweniye!

*Hisses from the townspeople as Oweweniye steps forward.*

*Osi:* Don't you like him as your king?

*More hissing from the townspeople.*

Well, the soil hasn't got any choice but to concede to erosion's downward flow. Whether or not you approve of him, he is your king. Hail him before I unveil the crown.  
(*The townspeople turn their heads away.*)  
Otun, unwrap the crown!

*As Otun unwraps the crown, Ogedemgbe runs in with a sword in his hand. He is followed by his warriors.*

**Ogedemgbe:** Abomination!

*There is pandemonium as he falls on the Ibadan warriors. The townspeople take to their heels as Ogedemgbe and his warriors engage in a sword battle with the Ibadan warriors.*

**Asi:** (*Seeing that they cannot cope with the situation.*)  
Run! Run, my people!

*Ibadan warriors run away leaving the crown behind. Ogedemgbe seizes the crown and shakes his sword violently.*

**Ogedemgbe:** Kill them all! Kill them!

*Ogedemgbe's warriors pursue the Ibadan warriors. The townspeople who have been hiding start sneaking in one by one.*

**Ogedemgbe:** I, Ogedemgbe, will not permit a bug to eat deep into our flesh. (*Shouts.*) You promised me life, you promised my people freedom and forced me to open my gates to you, but in turn, you killed Odigbadigba my king and sacked my town! I will not forgive you!

*Ogedemgbe's warriors return. They chant Ogedemgbe's praise names.*

**Warriors:** Ògèdèńgbé agbógun gbórò  
*Ogedemgbe of undaunted courage and ability,*  
Atìpọ̀npọ̀n.



*The immovable*  
 Akọ erinlá a borí pòòpò.  
*The male short-horned cow with huge head.*  
 À ní lée é bọ lẹyìn,  
*He is being pursued*  
 Ọ ní lárá iwájú.  
*Yet he too pursues others.*  
 Ó bá tiwá jà,  
*He fought with those in front*  
 Ó bá tẹyìn jà,  
*He also fought with those at the rear.*  
 Gbàndù bí igi àpèrè!  
*Robust like the àpèrè tree*

*Ogedemgbe:* Thank you, thank you. You've lived in perpetual fear these few months of Ibadan domination. I was not foolish or stupid to have opened our gates to them. It is the best a leader could do when his people are uncomfortably wedged in and their eyes have become deep sunken from hunger. They laid down a condition which I accepted: to embrace us all once we surrendered, but no sooner did they enter than they showed us how tyrannical they could be. We cannot accept an Ibadan king!

*All:* Never!

*Ogedemgbe:* We want our man to rule us!

*All:* Yes!

*Ogedemgbe:* We want an Ijesa man to rule Ijesa.

*All:* Yes!

*Ogedemgbe:* There is danger ahead I assure you. That is why we must re-group and join forces to resist Ibadan aggression. We must fight like men of wit and courage and fight even to the last man. We must fight for the sake of military glory and take back Igbajo, Otan, Esa, and all other towns which were ours, but are now forcibly seized by the Ibadan people.

*All:* Muso!

*Ogedemgbe:* I suffered enough in their hands when I was captured. They thought I was truly their's when they started teaching me the art of war not knowing that I am

truly an Ijesa son for whether you go east or west. . . .

*All:* . . . home is best.

*Ogedemgbe:* They found me a worthy servant, but I behaved like a monkey because I wanted to catch one. I will never forgive an Ibadan man. They are our deadly enemy and shouldn't be spared.

*All:* Muso, muso. . . .

*Ogunmodede:* (*Hastening in*) Silence! Silence!

*Ogedemgbe:* Ogunmodede!

*Ogunmodede:* Ibadan warriors are again at our gates.

*Ogedemgbe:* I shall kill them all!

*Ogunmodede:* They've come solely for you. You only. I heard Latosa instruct his boys to touch no one but you. Therefore make your escape.

*Ogedemgbe:* Escape?

*Ogunmodede:* Yes.

*Ogedemgbe:* And leave my town to them a second time? No, Ogunmodede, no! I shall kill all of them!

*Ogunmodede:* There is wisdom in your swift escape. Go to Akure, there you will be able to raise more people to assist you.

*Ogedemgbe:* No!

*Ogunmodede:* Escape, escape! You are our pride, our only pride. If you die, Ijesa people will also die and your many courageous deeds to save us will be without credit. If you escape, I will go with you!

*Ogedemgbe:* Do you agree with him, my people?

*All:* Yes.

*Ibadan warriors are heard singing from a distance.*

*Ogedemgbe:* I want to stay here and kill them all!

*All:* Escape!

*Ogedemgbe:* Escape?

*All:* Yes!

*Ogedemgbe:* (*Pauses*) Well, if it is your wish, I will (*Explodes*) But know this, Latosa, today the pendulum may swing to your side, but tomorrow, it will be to my advantage!

*Ogedemgbe leaves followed by Ogunmodede and the warriors.*

*The townspeople sit in groups, without a sound from any of them, even when Latosa with Otun, Osi and other Ibadan warriors storm in.*

*Latosa: Where is that animal? Where is he? Answer me if you value your lives. I haven't come back to be mocked. (He picks out a man from the crowd and shakes him violently. Where is he hiding? Where is Ogedemgbe hiding?)*

*First Man: (Points to the left.) He's gone this way.*

*Ibadan warriors go that way.*

*Second Man: No, this way. (Points to the right.)*

*Ibadan warriors run in that direction.*

*Third Man: (Points in a different direction.) Not that way! He ran this way.*

*Ibadan warriors rush in that direction.*

*First Man: He's here, he's here!*

*Ibadan Warriors: Where, where?*

*FIRST MAN stands up and IBADAN WARRIORS anxiously rush at him.*

*First Man: Right here.*

*Ibadan Warriors: Where?*

*First Man: Here. In . . . my . . . pocket! Ha ha ha!*

*IBADAN WARRIORS beat the FIRST MAN down.*

*Latosa: Osi, go into every house. Search every corner and bring him to me alive. He is a thorn in my flesh. (Osi and some warriors leave.) Stand up all of you! Thick headed fools! I know what you want: iron hands to remould your stubborn goat heads. Otun!*

*Otun: Live long.*

*Latosa: I put them all in your charge. See that every year a tribute of eight thousand cowries is paid to me. Work*



them hard. Make them sweat as they've never before done. And be warned, you fools. If any of you proves difficult, he shall be buried alive. You are Ibadan's slaves, and so shall you be till the end of time.

*LATOSA goes away leaving Otun and the warriors behind.*

*Otun:* Take off their clothes!

*As the WARRIORS begin to strip the townspeople of their clothes, darkness falls.*

#### Scene 4: The Cross Bow

The palace of the Deji Ojijiogun of Akure.

*Two days later. The Deji comes into his palace with Ogedemgbe behind him. They are followed by Ore, Ajero, and Olojudo.*

*Deji:* You shouldn't have come here, Ogedemgbe. Akure is no place for cowards and pompous warriors like you. We cannot accept you.

*Ogedemgbe:* Kabiyesi. . .

*Deji:* When we wanted you badly, you disappointed us; now that you need us, we do not want you. So, go back to where you came from.

*Ogedemgbe:* I am not a coward, my kings, nor am I a fool to have thrown open the gates of Ilesa to the Ibadan ruffians. They tricked me into it and you cannot be wiser than a man who deceives you.

*Deji:* Ogedemgbe!

*Ogedemgbe:* Kabiyesi?

*Deji:* In your many years of slavery in the city of those ruffians, did you not learn a bit, if not many, of their tricks and villanies and therefore they could not be used against you? You shouldn't have come here. When we entreated you to let us join forces to break their backs, did you not prop up your nose with a rude reply that Ijesa could successfully maintain their independence?

*Ogedemgbe:* Kabiyesi, I did not sheepishly condescend to do their bidding, but they starved my people to make us

agree to their promise not to molest us under their sway, but alas, no sooner had the snake been granted shelter in the rats' hole than he started feeding fat on the innocent rats.

*Deji:* Whoever loves to take risks, Ogedemgbe, I believe. . . .

*Olojudo:* . . . must first learn how to extricate himself.

*Deji:* But this you failed to do. You thought you were versed in protective charms and therefore could not be harmed. You forgot that the man who procured the charms for you is a human being and knows how to make them harmless. If a man boasts he can crack a nut on the shin of his legs. . . .

*Olojudo:* . . . will his children be able to do the same?

*Deji:* You may be sure of your might and endurance, Ogedemgbe, but you've been a fool to assume that the suffering innocents will rally round you when their houses are ruined through your stupidity. We envisaged what was going to happen to you. Olojudo here envisaged it, not so?

*Olojudo:* Quite right.

*Deji:* So also, Ore and Ajero who tried to draw you and the Ijesa from total humiliation by the Ibadan, but you became too heady and granted sorrow entry into your home.

*Ogedemgbe:* Forgive me, governors of our land. We see another's faults, but it is others who see ours. If we had known things would turn out to be so bad for us, we wouldn't have refused to answer your call for a united front. We did, and we are sorry for it. In unity, there is strength and in strength—victory. (*turning desperately to them all*) So, I implore you all to embrace us. It is not I alone who beg, but all Ijesa sons and daughters.

*Ore:* Elders, if the right hand is used to cane a child, the left must be used to pet him. And once a child realizes his folly and says, he's sorry, the elder forgets his anger. After all, a man who plants expects a good harvest and if the season does not favour him, he doesn't run to the blacksmith, he runs to his fellow farmers for yam seedlings for the next



planting season. And that's why Ogedemgbe is here. Since he has now realized we are the custodians of wisdom and we are fathers to him and his people, we shouldn't disown him or them, for a house does not scare away its owner's children. We shouldn't expose him again to the Ibadan warriors, else they'll make new inroads into our country because it is a divided family that trouble makers frequent. Therefore, I recommend that we ask him to swear by the earth and Ogun that he will always be loyal to us and never betray this alliance, for I believe, if a matter does not delay its execution

*Ajero:* We do not let it lie unattended.

*Olojudo:* (*Draws a dagger and gives it to Ogedemgbe.*) Ogedemgbe, touches the earth and swear by this.

*Ogedemgbe:* (*Touches the earth and takes the dagger. He holds the dagger level with his mouth*) I, Ogedemgbe, swear by the almighty earth and by this weapon of war that I shall not betray this alliance or give out its secret plans.

*Deji:* And if you do?

*Ogedemgbe:* Let the Lord of medicine render my charms impotent and let me die a slow, shameful death.

*OGEDEMGBE bites the dagger, DEJI takes the dagger from him and holds it forward.*

*Deji:* Let nothing break our alliance Now, we are a team and as a team we shall fight together even to the last man.

*Others join hands with him*

*All:* So, let it be!

*Blackout*

### Scene 5: The Curse

*The market at Imesi. Some men and women are at market stalls with their wares neatly displayed in front of them: yams, maize, handwoven clothes of assorted colours, vegetables displayed in raffia trays, sacks of cassava and palmwine. People are buying*

and selling. But their faces register sorrow and depression and the thought of tomorrow which may not dawn. The silence is broken by the arrival of Iyaabeji singing to the accompaniment of a talking drum carried by a drummer. She has a baby strapped to her back and carries another in her arms.

Iyaabeji: Ìyá oníbejì ló ñ kí gbogboo yín o,  
It is the mother of twins that greets you all,  
Ìyá oníbejì ló ñ kí gbogboo wòn.  
It is the mother of twins that greets all of them.  
Şé tèwe tàgbà tó wà lójà yí lẹdún ñ kí,  
The young and the old who are in this market, the twins greet you.

Ìyá oníbejì ló ñ kí gbogboo wòn.  
It is the mother of twins that greets all of you.

Palmwine Seller: Iyaabeji! Take! (He gives her a coin and IYAABEJI genuflects, taking the coin but without stopping singing )

Iyaabeji: Owó layé fẹ.  
Money is the world's desire,  
Owó layé fẹ,  
Money is the world's desire,  
Qba ó' şadéşina fẹyin  
May the king expose you to wealth  
B'Ólúwa bá fẹ . . .  
If it be God's wish . . .

FALOLA, a middle aged woman comes to the market, neatly attired in handwoven clothes with an attractive hair-do.

Falola: Iyaabeji, take. (Gives IYAABEJI a coin.)

Iyaabeji: (Accepts the coin and genuflects.)

Qba ó' şadéşina fẹyin  
May the king expose you to wealth  
B'Ólúwa bá fẹ.  
If it be God's wish

Palmwine Seller: Falola, why are you so dressed up?

Falola: My husband is celebrating his annual Ọsẹ festival and we all are in festive mood.

*Palmwine Seller:* So, it's already a year since he celebrated last! How time flies. I wish him long life.

*Falola:* Thank you. How much is this gourd of palmwine?

*Palmwine Seller:* I admire your husband. Give the wine to him and tell him it's my own contribution to his festival. Greet him for me. I shall call on him in the evening.

*Falola:* (*Genusfleets, taking the gourd*) Thank you. May the gods protect you against the danger of climbing.

*Palmwine Seller:* Ashe, ashe!

(*Amen, amen!*)

*As FALOLA picks up the gourd of palmwine, three armed men storm into the market. The market people shrink back in fear.*

*Iranse I:* Don't move! Ajele Oyepetu wants everything in this market brought to him. So pick up whatever you have and follow. (*FALOLA is about to leave*). And you woman! Where do you think you are going?

*Falola:* I am not a market woman.

*Iranse II:* What difference does that make? Come on, march with the rest!

*Iranse I:* (*To IYAABEJI.*) And you, Iyaabeji!

*Iyaabeji:* I am not an Ekiti woman.

*Iranse I:* Who says?

*Iyaabeji:* I am an Ibadan woman, can't you see by the mark on my face?

*Iranse I:* Who is your father?

*Iyaabeji:* Chief Onibon of Ibadan.

*Iranse I:* In that case, you are free to go.

*Iyaabeji:* Thank you. (*Picks up the song again as she goes out with the DRUMMER.*)

Qba má' se wá lóníşé.

*May the Lord save us from working without wages.*

Oníşé m̀ bẹ níyàtò.

*Strange is the lot of those who labour in vain.*

Qba má se wá lóníşé . . . .

*May the lord save us from working, without wages . . .*

*The market people pick up their wares and file forward. Those who find it difficult to lift their heavy loads are helped by THE IRANSE.*



*Iranse I:* Now, to Ajele's house!

*The people begin to march slowly with one of the Iranse in front, one at the rear and the First Iranse by their side. They go round in a circle once. Then IYAMI enters with a load of firewood on her head.*

*Iranse I:* Stop! (The people obey.) Iya, join the queue. (IYAMI pays no attention to him, IRANSE I drags her to the queue)

Are you now the one to disobey me? Fall in line, old hag!

*Iyami:* And you were born of a woman! Have you no respect for old age, no pity for an old woman who has none left in this world to comfort her?

*Iranse I:* Fall in line! (He pushes her toward the line. IYAMI falls with her load. The market people scream in surprise. IRANSE II picks her up and puts the load upon her head.) Before you die, this load must get to Ajele's palace. After that you may go to your grave . . . Now, move everybody and don't tell me you're tired. Move!

*The people begin their slow march, now climbing the steps to the upper level of the ramp. IYAMI finds it more and more difficult to climb.*

*Iranse I:* Iya, you'd better not die here. If you do, your corpse will be thrown to the hungry dogs. So, move!

*When they get to the upper ramp, they begin to descend. Finally when they arrive at the bottom of the ramp they stop. They have reached the Ajele's palace.*

Now, lay everything down here and wait to greet your master.

*The people lay all they carry down, but FALOLA holds firmly to the gourd of palmwine.*

*Iranse I:* Old woman, you may now go and die, then I'll know you've done one thing in your life worth remembering: fetching firewood for the Ajele.

*Iyami:* The earth only goes barren and does not die, but the day you became an embryo is the day you began to wither. You treated me badly and wished me dead, but I will

not die with you still alive. You've exceeded your limit, Iranse, and abused your heaven, and the day the duiker's horn shows prominently over his head is the day the hunters kill him.

*Iranse I: (Laughs.)* So, you are a hunter! What do you hunt? Duiker or human beings? You are ancient. Go!

*Iyami:* From ancient times have we heard of death ignoring the old and taking the young . . . .

*Iranse I: (Pushes her away.)* Go . . . .!

*As drums usher in the AJELE OYEPETU, IYAMI departs. AJELE OYEPETU emerges from behind the upper level onto the ramp.*

*Iranse II:* Salute the Ajele!

*All:* Kabiyesi!

*Oyepetu:* Is this all they have to bring?

*Iranse I:* These are from one of many markets we are yet to visit, my Lord.

*Oyepetu:* Let them store the booty away. Aaah haah! the smell of that wine intoxicates me. Bring it here.

*The people begin to carry their wares out.*

*Falola:* I am sorry, the wine isn't yours.

*Oyepetu:* Say that again and you are dead.

*Falola:* The wine is for my husband.

*Oyepetu:* Who is your husband? Who is your husband?

*Falola:* Fabunmi is my lord and master.

*Oyepetu: (Laughs roughly.)* So that youngster has such a beautiful wife? *(Approaches her suggestively.)* Aaah! I am thirsty, my lower region yearns for yours. *Suddenly grabs her.* Come with me!

*Falola:* No! No! No!

*IRANSE II takes the wine from her while OYEPETU drags her up the ramp and forces her down out of sight. FALOLA screams. The people clearing the last bit of the loot are shocked.*

*Iranse I:* Are you shocked? She will enjoy it, don't worry. Who knows it may be your turn next time, or your wife's, or your daughter's. . . So go back to your homes!

*Falola screams more, and finally her screaming becomes more*

*and more feeble until it dies down completely. THE THREE IRANSES begin to do a suggestive dance while the townspeople look on in awe. FALOLA rushes forward, weeping. OYEPETU follows her. THE THREE IRANSES tease FALOLA by trying to get hold of her wrapper which almost falls off her. They laugh. She rushes out.*

*Oyepetu: Come here! Let her go!*

*Iranses: Long live the Ajele!*

*Oyepetu: Now, to other things. You, bring me a seat, and a cup. (IRANSE II disappears behind the ramp and comes out with a stool and a calabash cup. OYEPETU sits upon the stool.) Now, let me have a taste of her husband's wine. (The palmwine is served him. He drinks.) Aaah! it tastes good, just like the woman. Pour me another.*

*Just as he is about to take the second cup, FABUNMI thunders in, with a cutlass sharp in his hand. He runs straight to OYEPETU, but the THREE IRANSES intercept him and there is a clash of steel. OYEPETU quickly disappears behind the ramp. FABUNMI wounds the THREE IRANSES, the first, the second and the third one. They groan and stagger off stage. FABUNMI jumps behind the ramp. All that is now visible is his cutlass coming up and going down like a flash of lightning as OYEPETU yells in agony. Then silence. FABUNMI springs onto the ramp with his cloth and cutlass soaked in blood. He is wild with anger, yet a sudden further surge of power is generated from inside him.*

*Fabunmi: Kill all Ajele in Ekiti! Kill all Ajele in Ijeshaland! Massacre all Oyo sons and daughters! Break the cord of tyranny and oppression! Killlllll!*

*Brandishing his cutlass, he runs out wildly. Sharp blackout.*

### **Scene 6: The White Calabash**

*A month later. The scene is Oloja Oke's palace at Imesi, two boys enter, one with a rope in his hand.*

*First Boy: You stand there and I will stand at this end. Now let's see who is the stronger.*

*Second Boy: I'm stronger than you.*



*First Boy:* Don't boast until you've proved it and once you've proved you are strong, I will bow my head to you in salute.

*Second Boy:* Now, throw the rope.

*First Boy:* There. Pull. Pull!!

*They pull with all their might. The SECOND BOY drags the FIRST BOY slowly to his side, but suddenly the FIRST BOY braces himself and pulls harder and harder until the SECOND BOY falls to the ground. The FIRST BOY rushes at him and pins him down with his knees. He raises his clenched fist as if to hit him.*

*First Boy:* I won't hit you because we speak the same language. Get up.

*Second Boy:* (*Gets up.*) But our people kill in spite of that.

*First Boy:* They are foolish. Now, bend down and let me make a mule of you.

*Second Boy:* Is it because you are the stronger?

*First Boy:* Bend down, my friend. I want to take advantage of my power. Bend down and let me ride you. Power blinds, my father told me, and it puts a thin leather on your sense of reasoning and you care little about your fellow men whether they eat or not as long as you satisfy yourself. Bend down!

*Second Boy:* Will you let me ride you in return?

*First Boy:* A man on top never likes to be put under. Bend down.

*The SECOND BOY bends down and the FIRST BOY is about to mount his back when THREE MESSENGERS come in. One bears in his hand, a white covered calabash. The SECOND BOY tries to run at the sight of the men, but the FIRST BOY drags him back.*

*First Boy:* Don't run away! The stronger must protect the weaker. I will protect you. (*To the men.*) What do you want in my father's palace? Can't you see I am powerful? (*Flexes his muscles.*)

*First Messenger:* (*Smiles.*) Yes, you are powerful. You will come with me to Ibadan and let me teach you how to fight. (*Shoots an imaginary gun.*) GWAMM!

*First Boy:* I can fight better than your General.

*First Messenger:* Embarrassed. Go and tell Kabiyesi we want to see him.

*First Boy:* Go and tell Kabiyesi, go and tell Kabiyesi! Do you think I am your slave? This is Imesi and not Ibadan.

*First Messenger:* I know this is Imesi. And that is why we've come to give this calabash to your father, the Oloja Oke.

*First Boy:* What's in it? Show me.

*First Messenger:* Something very sweet.

*Off stage, there is a shout of 'Kabiyesi'. OLOJA OKE enters. He is followed by a man carrying a carved stool and another, bearing in his hand, a large feather fan. The stool is set down, and the OLOJA OKE settles down on it.*

*Messengers:* Kabiyesi!

*Oloja Oke:* Welcome to Imesi. (*To the BOYS.*) You boys, go and play outside.

*First Boy:* I have power!

*Oloja Oke:* Power kills, my boy, when it becomes too obvious. (*The BOYS run out.*) And don't go beating all the boys in the neighbourhood! Now, my people.

*First Messenger:* We bring greetings from Latosa, the Aare of Ibadan. The news of the rebellion sparked off by Fabunmi, your nephew, came to us as a shock. We in Ibadan, as your overlord view this with grave concern and we hope the sad event will never repeat itself. We have no doubt the Ekiti people are still loyal to us and will ever be, in spite of what happened. My General said I should let you know that as long as you still believe and accept our supremacy over Ekiti and Ijesa countries, peace will reign supreme in your kingdom. But we cannot believe in your loyalty while that rebellious upstart, Fabunmi, is still alive and boasting under your protection.

*Oloja Oke:* It is difficult to silence a man who has something to boast of. Even if he agrees to be silenced, this pride will always be reflected in his countenance and in his dealing with people. I am sure your Aare never dreamt that what happened could ever happen, but when a pursued dog is chased to the wall, does he not show his teeth?

He not only shows them, but bites his pursuer. Speak, I do not know what redress your Aare is seeking.

*First Messenger:* Since it is the finger that offends we extract from the rest, my General will let you stay easy in your palace, but this calabash (*holding it out*) must be returned to Ibadan with Fabunmi's head inside it.

*Oloja Oke:* His request is good. Very good indeed. But how wrongly he does presume! Does he not know that a lunatic who feeds her baby on the refuse heap loves the baby and would not surrender it to a man of affluence for proper care? Even if we are the weaker side, we are still proud of our men. That is why I have no power to accede to your General's request. And no one in the whole of our country has the power to surrender to him Fabunmi's royal head.

*First Messenger:* Do you want your country destroyed because of a single head?

*Oloja Oke:* What to you is a single head is worth more than a million in my kingdom. If your General is so bent on having his head, why can't he come himself to take it?

*First Messenger:* I take it then that you hold yourself responsible for this insult?

*Oloja Oke:* I do. Do you know the man whose head you've come to take? Could you recognize him if you saw him?

*Messengers:* No.

*Oloja Oke:* In that case, I will let you meet him. (*to the man who brought the stool.*) You, go and call Fabunmi to my palace. You will find him (*to the MESSENGERS*) in the garden. . . . After seeing him, tell me if you would do away with such a handsome boy were you in my position.

*First Messenger:* Beauty is nothing in times of crisis. Many handsome warriors have died in battle and many more will be lost if you, as we've known you to be from time immemorial, remain stubborn.

*Oloja Oke:* We have suffered enough under your rule and no more suffering can be more agonising than that we have had already under your rule.

*Fabunmi:* (*Enters and prostrates.*) Kabiyesi.



*Oloja Oke:* Rise, my boy. These are messengers from Ibadan. They've come with a demand. . . . (to the MESSENGERS) Tell him. A mouth does not become too heavy for its owner to move.

*First Messenger:* Your head, Fabunmi, in this calabash!

*Oloja Oke:* That's what they've come for.

*Fabunmi:* Who are they that need my head and not my brain?

*First Messenger:* Aare Latosa and all Ibadan sons and daughters.

*Fabunmi:* I see. Very well, Kabiyesi. What reply did you give them?

*Oloja Oke:* A son is dearer in his mother's arm than gold and silver.

*Fabunmi:* Then why call me to witness, Kabiyesi?

*Oloja Oke:* So it doesn't sound like a made-up story.

*Fabunmi:* Kabiyesi, long may you reign. (*Prostrates and goes out.*)

*Oloja Oke:* Go back and tell your Aare that I greet him. Tell him that next time he should learn how to consult with his elders before making such a stupid demand. Go!

*Oloja Oke rises and leaves followed by the two Attendants. The three messengers also leave as the lights go out on them.*

### Scene 7: The Approach to Death

*The THREE MESSENGERS appear on their way back to Ibadan. Suddenly FABUNMI jumps out on them with a cutlass sharp in his hand. The MESSENGERS are alarmed. They turn back and take to their heels.*

*Fabunmi:* You messengers of doom!

*FABUNMI pursues them out of sight. There are cries of agony as his cutlass comes down heavily on two of the messengers. The noise soon dies down. The Second MESSENGER backs into view, followed by FABUNMI holding two bloody heads, his cutlass soaked in blood. He threatens the SECOND MESSENGER with his cutlass.*

*Fabunmi:* Tell your Aare that I, Fabunmi, am not a coward who would run at the sight of death. I've done my best and he should do his worst. Give him these and run!

*The MESSENGER accepts the bloody heads of his mates, and takes to his heels. Fabunmi explodes again with a sudden surge of power and anger.*

*Fabunmi:* I have done it again, my people! Rise and pick up your weapons! There is war. . . .! Beat the drum! Sound the gong! War has come! (*Hastily he leaves.*)

*The drums of war begin to beat. People begin to answer the call of drums. They are armed to the teeth and look determined. All the men Ekiti can boast of troop in with swords, cutlasses, bows and arrows, spears and dane guns. They chant Fabunmi's praise names.*

*Ekiti Warriors:* Fabunmi Abe  
Fabunmi Abe,—  
Òrará lá'dá,  
Of the mighty sword,  
Ò ránmọ níṣẹ́ fáyà tíí  
Who stands by his words  
Ègbèjí, Ajíbòògùn sọrọ  
And converses with charms every morning.  
Onilé imọ  
He has no property  
Tí í yonilé ewé lẹnu!  
Yet will not allow those who have to enjoy  
theirs!

*Fabunmi storms in.*

*Fabunmi:* Silence! This is no time for praises, my people, but time for action.

*Warriors:* Heeeee!

*Fabunmi:* Time to prove you are men of valour, ready to die for the liberation of your country: your country which is still greedily held by those degenerate and rapacious Ibadan war chiefs must be freed!

Warriors: Yes....!

Fabunmi: Silence! I have sent Ogunmodede to persuade Ogedemgbe to lead this campaign because of his wide experience in the art of war. Until his arrival, I will ask you to make ready, treating your weapons with poison, or putting new life into your lungs. Ogun\* is on our side, I assure you. The gods too know that we've suffered enough at the hands of the Ibadan war ruffians and they will not turn their backs on us. (*The warriors settle themselves down.*) You've seen wars and fought battles and known the hazards of sieges. So be warned, this is just one of many wars that will be fought in our country as long as we have greedy and over-ambitious idiots managing the affairs of our nation. Those who see truth and dodge the truth must be routed!

Warriors: Heeeeeee!

Fabunmi: Those who corrupt the world and bend people to their side with false illusions of a bright future must be wiped out of existence!

Warriors: Heeeeeee!

Fabunmi: This is the time to start it, otherwise we may end up having a country where every man is oppressed by those in positions of power.

Warriors: Fabunmi Àbe!

Fabunmi: Silence! This war, we are not going to knowing we shall return. We either win or die fighting. And fight we shall, even to the last man.

Warriors: (*In a sing song chant*) To the last man! To the last man! To the last man!

Fabunmi: Silence! Here comes, Ogunmodede!

*The warriors make way for OGUNMODEDE, as he passes among them.*

Where is he? Where is Ogedemgbe, that elephant with a fat tail Where is he?

Ogunmodede: It was a fruitless journey.

Warriors: What?

Ogunmodede: I did a lot of persuasion, but Ogedemgbe seems uninterested in this campaign. So also is his friend, Aduloju.



*Fabunmi:* Uninterested? Why? Why?

*Ogunmodede:* Personal reasons, he called them.

*Fabunmi:* Is this the collapse of our alliance? Oh, when will our people learn to unite! If we want to eat bean powder, why don't we do it neatly, rather than shake our hands covered with the crumbs of it into our plates. If we plan to unite, why can't we do it whole-heartedly? I am disappointed, Ogunmodede, I am disappointed.

*Ogunmodede:* We shouldn't let a lone tree amongst wild grass cast a shadow upon our collective effort. If a cutlass is out of reach, what next do we do?

*Warriors:* Till our land with a hoe!

*Ogunmodede:* They serve almost the same purpose. We have you, a courageous young man, and those around you. Why then should we be bothered if an elderly man fails to show up at our wrestling match. You've done what a leader should do and you are indeed a leader. What do you think, my people?

*Warriors:* Lead us to the battle and we shall follow.

*Ogunmodede:* Hail Fabunmi, the Balogun of Ekiti!

*Warriors:* Muse!!!

*Fabunmi:* Thank you, my people, thank you. Well, a boy grows into manhood and while growing, he learns more and more everyday. Therefore, I am ready to lead and learn, and if tomorrow, death comes, I shall go into my grave satisfied that I've served you, my people. Nevertheless, I still want Ogedemgbe to join us. There is a lot we can learn from him. (*Suddenly he draws his sword.*) Draw your weapons!

*The WARRIORS rise and draw their weapons and fall in line. FABUNMI goes down the line inspecting them.*

*Fabunmi:* Forget your fathers, forget your mothers. Forget your wives and children because it's going to be tough. It's going to be rough and it's going to be bloody. We'll first fall on Igbajo. If we could seize that formidable border town before Latosa does, Ekiti country is protected in the eastern part. If we don't, Latosa and his warriors will

have free access to the mountains surrounding the town and jump into our country. We must not let them. When Igbajo is taken, our target then will be Ikirun. There we shall split into two—one half fighting towards the Ilorin Fulani and the other half towards Ibadan itself. Then Ekiti is saved at home and abroad. Remember this is a fight to the finish!

*(He breaks into a song.)*

*Fabunmi:* Ó dojú ogun máa bò o!  
*Now to the battle field, follow!*

*Warriors:* Igba eni láa pè,  
*Two hundred would call,*  
Igba eni láá jẹ o.  
*Two hundred would respond.*

*The WARRIORS make music with their spears by hitting the ground with them.*

*FABUNMI returns to the upper ramp as he leads the song and the WARRIORS dance in a circle.*

*Fabunmi:* Ó dojú ogun máa bò o!  
*Now to the battle field, follow!*

*Warriors:* Igba ẹni láa pè,  
*Two hundred would call,*  
Igba ẹni láa jẹ o. . . .  
*Two hundred would answer!*

*Fabunmi:* Ka k'Ìbadan mọlẹ  
*To grab the Ibadan*

*Warriors:* Ka sé ọn sí koto.  
*And put them all in a cage!*

*Fabunmi:* Ka k'Ìbàdàn mọlẹ  
*To grab the Ibadan*

*Warriors:* Ka sọ ọn sí koto!  
*And put them all in a cage!*

*Fabunmi:* Ó dòkè Ìbàdàn  
*Now to the Ibadan mountains*

*Warriors:* Ka finá tú ọn ká.  
*To disperse them with fire!*

*Fabunmi:* Òkú Ìbàdàn  
*Ibadans' dead bodies*  
*Warriors:* Ka finá jó ọn láú!  
*To be set ablaze!*  
*Fabunmi:* Òkè Ìbàdàn  
*Ibadan mountains*  
*Warriors:* Fẹrẹ gùún  
*I will climb with ease*  
Fẹrẹ sọ́ọ!  
*And descend with ease!*  
*Fabunmi:* Òkè Ìbàdàn  
*Ibadan mountains*  
*Warriors:* Fẹrẹ gùún  
*I will climb with ease*  
Fẹrẹ sọ́ọ!  
*And descend with ease!*

*AMI frantically blows his horn as the warriors begin to file away, singing. FABUNMI follows them as the sky becomes crimson. As the war song fades away, the THREE IYAMI, adorned with large plumes like giant birds, fly onto the stage. They fold their wings and the moon reveals their faces. They sing in shrill voices:*

*Iyami I:* Ẹyẹ òkun ni mí.  
*I am the bird of the ocean.*  
*Iyami II:* Ẹyẹ igbó ni mí.  
*I am the bird of the woods.*  
*Iyami III:* Ẹyẹ ọrun ni mí.  
*I am the heavenly bird.*  
*Iyamis:* A lè fò kojáa sánmọ;  
*The sky is not our limit;*  
A lè fò kojá ọrun ééé.  
*Heaven is not our limit.*  
*Iyami I:* Àtẹwọq wa oní'yé bọrọbọrọ la fi dayé mú ọ́nshín.  
(in speaking voice) Ayé ń bẹ ní'káwọq wa.  
*But the world, we hold tightly in our feathery palms.*  
(in speaking voice) *The world is in our hands.*  
*Iyami II:* A lè yakọ.  
*We can be men.*



Iyami I: A lè yabo.

*We can be women.*

Iyami III: A lè şàl yakọ, a lè şàl yabo.

*We can be neither men nor women.*

Iyami I: A kii darúgbó

*We are ageless,*

Iyami II: A kii darúgbó

*We are ageless,*

Iyami III: A kii darúgbó!

*We are ageless.*

Iyamis: Báa ti rí la ti rí.

*We are always as we are.*

Iyami I: Báa bá yá,

*When we yarn,*

Ẹnikan ò le yá,

*No one yarns.*

Báa bá kọrin,

*When we sing,*

Ẹyẹ ò gbọdọ lanu.

*No bird dare open its mouth.*

Báa bá wá fẹ fayé şe yẹyẹ,

*When we want the world at our feet,*

A ó ni káyé máa ta pọun-pọun!

*We may ask them to dance to our amusement.*

Iyamis: (Laugh and now talk) Aşe t'ókété bá pa fúnlẹ nilẹ n gbọ.

*Because the command of the parched rat is what the earth takes.*

Iyami III: Ajélẹ ò mẹni tí mo jẹ,

*The Ajele knew not who I was*

Ó ní kí wọn wá gbagi idáná a mi

*And deprived me of my firewood.*

Ó mà şe!

*How mean!*

Èyí mà pọ o!

*What insolence!*

Àsikó tó fún wa láti dára fún wọn—

*Now it's time to pay them back in their own style!*  
*Wọn gbé!*  
*They are doomed!*

*Iyami II: Ojú ogun là nìlọ tààrà.*  
*Our destination: the battle field.*  
*Kì la nìlọ sẹ?*  
*And our task?*

*Iyamis: A mí lọ oo*  
*Here we go,*  
*Eeee!*  
*Yes!*  
*A mí lọ*  
*Now we go,*  
*Gbara wa á lẹ*  
*To protect our warriors*  
*Lọwọ Ìbàdàn bùrúkú.*  
*From the tyrant Ibadan.*

*Iyami I: Báa ti nìfò lọ*  
*As we fly on,*  
*Kéyẹkéyẹ sá para mọ.*  
*Let no bird fly.*  
*A mí lọ oo*  
*Here we go,*  
*Eeee!*  
*Yes!*  
*A mí lọ,*  
*Now we go,*  
*Gbara wa á lẹ*  
*To protect our warriors*  
*Lọwọ Ìbàdàn burúkú.*  
*From the tyrant Ibadan.*

*They chuckle, unfold their wings and as they fly off repeating the first three lines of the song. Darkness completely envelopes the stage.*

## Scene 8: Igbajo

*Two weeks later at the Palace of the Owa of Igbajo. The Owa, FAMODUN I, with a cloth wrapped round his waist and a skull cap on his head, gazes into the distant future through the palace window. His back is turned to the audience. Drums send war messages at intervals.*

*Eseni: (Enters with a pair of animal skin slippers in his hand.)*  
Kabiyesi, try these for the comfort of your toes. The one that hurts is being repaired.

*Famodun:* Eseni, any news of our men from Ibadan?

*Eseni:* No news, Kabiyesi.

*Famodun:* Hmmm. I could see through the passing of the clouds, Fabunmi's rapid progress to this peaceful town of my ancestors.

*Eseni: (Bends down and slips the slippers into Famodun's feet.)*  
Have no fear, my king. If the clouds descend on us before sunrise, I assure you, our men will hold Igbajo until help comes from Ibadan.

*Fayin comes in, straight from the farm.*

*Fayin:* Long may you reign, Famodun the First.

*Eseni:* He greets you.

*Fayin: (Prostrates.)* Kabiyesi!

*Famodun:* Rise, Fayin, rise. What news?

*Fayin:* Ogboriefon is almost at our gates with a thousand warriors for our rescue. I heard too of the advance of the Ekiti people. It's a pity ours is a small town, for how I hate soliciting outside help in times of crisis!

*Famodun:* When a man is drowning, he forgets his pride and shouts for help, even to his enemy. Ours was once a large town, but it was war that drove us to this land when you were still a young lad. Sit down. Igbajo and Ilesa were kinsmen. We grew from the same stem and we were given a crown each by our fcrefather, Oduduwa.\* But soon, the Ijesa people forgot that fact and took advantage of our small population to force us to pay annual tributes to them,



saying we are their slaves. We are no slaves of the Ijesa people; we were brothers. But when there was to be war, we compromised with them by sending our people to them with loads of gifts. But one year . . . .

\*Oduduwa—son of Olodumare, creator of the world who was sent down from heaven to found the Yoruba nation.

*ESENI assumes a regal posture in an enactment of the past as the lights go down on Famodun. Two girls and a man come in carrying an imaginary load of yams and a keg of palmoil with a man, LALURU, who drags a goat along with him. The girls kneel in front of ESENI and LALURU ties the goat to an imaginary pole and prostrates.*

All: Kabiyesi!

Eseni: Welcome.

Laluru: We bring greetings from the Arigbajo of Igbajo. He wishes you well with this load of yams, this keg of palmoil, and this he-goat.

*(They put the loads down. But suddenly AWORO runs into the palace as ESENI is about to inspect the gifts.)*

Aworo: Kabiyesi, it is abomination to touch any of these things!

Eseni: Why?

Aworo: They broke a taboo!

Eseni: What taboo?

Aworo: Did you not say that anybody who tramples over your ancestor's grave must die, no matter who?

Eseni: *(Furious.)* They did?

Aworo: Yes, the three of them!

Eseni: They must die! Sacrifice them to the gods.

Girls: No!

*The girls attempt to run, but AWORO gestures and two men come in and seize the girls. LALURU beats down AWORO who confronts him, and escapes.*

Eseni: Run after him, he mustn't escape!

*Girls:* No! Please! Please! No. . . .!

*The girls are dragged out. There is a scream. Then silence. Lights go down on ESENI and come back on FAMODUN.*

*Famodun:* Haah! What a way to repay kindness. The blood of innocent girls, warm by the ordeal of many days' journey, flowed in his palace and the sky became red with it. Red! Red! I could see it. I could see it is the sky. Red! Why!

*FAMODUN breaks down and FAYIN who has been watching with awe, runs to him and lifts him up.*

*Fayin:* Kabiyesi!

*Famodun:* (Recovering.) We stopped sending them gifts and this displeased them. They thought it was our duty still to pay them tributes in spite of that tragedy which most touched our hearts; but we stayed in our homes and expected the worst.

*Lights go down on Famodun and come up on Eseni.*

*Eseni:* (Shouts in a fit of madness). Capture all of them, and if they resist kill them! Kill them!!

*Lights go out on Eseni and comes back on Famodun.*

*Famodun:* We were good to our neighbours and our neighbouring towns were good to us: Ada, Otan, and their neighbours helped us fight the Ijesa. Help was late coming from Ibadan, but eventually it came. But alas, we were driven twice from our original place to this present valley. And now, we are at it again, God help us.

*War drums sound loudly and more sinister. Fayin springs from his seat.*

*Fayin:* That is a total call to arms. I must go and prepare.

*Eseni:* (Runs in and prostrates,) Kabiyesi, Ogboriefon is here.

Fabunmi also. The fight has begun!

Fayin: Good bye, Kabiyesi. If we meet again, good. If not. . .  
(Exits.)

Famodun: What of our men?

Eseni: They are now joining battle. The whole town is now in chaos. I am told the fight is bloody, but Ogboriefon is gaining the upper hand.

Famodun: Is Ogedemgbe with them?

Eseni: No news of him. May be he is fighting in the rear.

Famodun: That is not his style. He leads when he means to fight. Bring me my garment. (Exit Eseni.) If Death will come, let him meet me well dressed.

*A glow of fire is reflected in the palace. FAMODUN hears the sound of guns and screaming women and children.*

Famodun: Oh! they are burning down my beautiful town  
I don't know what offence the buildings have committed  
that they should turn on them: those thick headed idiots  
with thorns in their skulls.

OGBORIEFON enters with Qtun and Osi.

Ogboriefon: Kabiyesi, get dressed, you must leave immediately. Once a leader is captured, the war is ended. You mustn't cheapen your kingdom by allowing your capture.

Famodun: Where should I go, leaving my people behind?

Ogboriefon: They shall leave with you, for Oshogbo. The cowards have started burning down the houses in their retreat, but your palace will not be touched, I assure you, and you may later return. If not alive, dead, for a king's head stays in the palace.

*Eseni comes in with Famodun's robe and FAMODUN begins to put it on*

Ogboriefon: Qtun, see that the entrance is well guarded, and get ready the horse, fast! (Qtun goes out.)

Famodun: (to the heavens) My ancestor, you founded this town and now we are being forced out of it a second time.



Wherever you are today, come to our aid. Let the Ekiti see shame!

OTUN *rushes in.*

Otun: We cannot go by the gate, it's useless. We must find another safe place.

Ogboriefon: Whatever happens, Kabiyesi must get out of here.

Voices: (from outside of the palace). Ajayi Ogboriefon, come out! We know you are there, Come out!

Ogboriefon: Good luck, Kabiyesi.

OTUN and OSI lead FAMODUN away. ESENI follows.

Voices: Ogboriefon, come out!

Ogboriefon: I must clear the road for Kabiyesi.

*Ogboriefon dips his hand into his pocket, brings out a small pouch and from it takes out a piece of white chalk. He draws a big circle on the floor behind the door. Takes a deer horn and speaks into it.*

Ogboriefon: An animal encircled in the lion's urine becomes meat of the circumciser king of the forest. (He draws his sword.)

Voices: Come out or we'll break the door open!

Ogboriefon: Come and take a weakling, fools!

*He goes carefully behind the circle and kicks the palace door open with a crash. He jumps clear of the circle. Four EKITIPARAPO WARRIORS storm into the palace. Two of them run into the chalk circle and they are glued there, fighting hard to free themselves as if tied with a rope. The two who do not fall into the chalk circle cross swords with OGBORIEFON. They fight him bravely but OGBORIEFON wounds one, and then the other. They groan and fall. OGBORIEFON ignores the two trapped men and turns to the door, shouting.*

Ogboriefon: I am here! Come and take me! Come and take a child born only yesterday! Come!!!!

*Stealthily another EKITI WARRIOR comes in behind OGBORIEFON. He draws his sword, but just as he is about to run it through*

*OGBORIEFON, he dodges to one side. The WARRIOR misses his target and OGBORIEFON seizes him by the hand and throws him into the circle. The WARRIOR screams as he is also trapped in the circle.*

*Ogboriefon: When a tiger sleeps, he tunes his ears to everything around him. You cannot take me unawares, understand? I, Ogboriefon, I see with both fore and aft eyes.*

*Another WARRIOR runs into the palace through another entrance with a dagger sharp in his hand. He leaps like a cat on OGBORIEFON.*

*Warrior: Now....!*

*Ogboriefon grabs him and floors him without difficulty. He pins him down with his knees and twists his arm so the dagger drops. He then puts one hand in his throat and raises the other hand to deal the WARRIOR a blow.*

*Warrior: Kill me! Kill me!*

*Ogboriefon: Where are the rest of your men? Where are they?*

*Warrior: Six of us were sent to bring the King's head.*

*Ogboriefon: (slaps the Warrior's face twice) And you have the nerve to say that? Where are the rest of you? Where is that idiot, Fabunmi?*

*Warrior: They've retreated to Imesi to camp.*

*Ogboriefon: Cowards!*

*OGBORIEFON lifts the WARRIOR up and throws him into the chalk circle to be trapped like his mates. OTUN, OSI and other IBADAN WARRIORS rush in.*

*Ibadan Warriors: Àjayi òòò!*

*Hail Ajayi!*

*Ògbóriefon, a bojú agada bí iná,*

*Ogboriefon, whose sword is like fire in the flesh,*

*Dùrùkù duruku,*

*The powerful man,*

*A boògùn í gbóògùn pòn...*

Whose charms render other people's charms useless. . .

*Ogboriefon:* Quiet! Get some drums. (*Exit warriors.*) These fools must do a dance of ridicule. Now, fools, let's see if your ears are as dead to music as your brains are to reason.

*The two IBADAN WARRIORS bring in two drums. The other IBADAN WARRIORS begin to sing to the beat of the drums.*

*Ibadan Warriors:* Jíjọ ìyà ká wòó!

*Do a dance of shame!*

Jíjọ ìyà ká wòó!

*Do a dance of shame!*

Pànlà şigi sáú sáú sáú—

*The way an idiot does it—*

Pànlá!

*Does it!*

Jíjọ ìyà ká wòó.

*Do a dance of shame.*

*Ogboriefon:* Surround them! (*Seeing that the captives are not responding.*)

*IBADAN WARRIORS surround the captives keeping outside the chalk circle. OGBORIEFON again speaks to his horn.*

Command of the forest king is the acceptance of the animals—accept the words of my mouth, Ekiti fools, and drop your weapons!

*The captives drop their weapons.*

Whatever house the cock builds at dawn, with his own legs he scatters it at dusk. Circle, dispel! . . . Seize them!

(*IBADAN WARRIORS seize the CAPTIVES.*) Take them away.

*The CAPTIVES are taken out. MOGAJI enters.*

*Mogaji:* Congratulations, Ajayi!

*Ogboriefon:* Mogaji, I salute you. Where is Oshungbekun? Have we lost him?

*Osi:* No.

*Mogaji:* Here he comes.

*Oshungbekun comes in staggering, soaked with alcohol. He belches.*



*Oshungbekun:* Jijó iyà ká wòó. . .

*Ogboriẹfọn:* You've been drinking again, Oshungbekun though our assignment is not yet completed.

*Oshungbekun:* An elder will not trip and empty the things in his stomach, it is whatever one eats and drinks that belongs to him.

*Ogboriẹfọn:* Suppose I kill you for indiscipline?

*The WARRIORS return*

*Oshungbekun:* I know you won't. Even if you do, you'll gain nothing by my death. Is Latosa not drunk with power? Just sit here risking your life and him putting his sons in positions of trust. He wants to see our end!

*Ogboriẹfọn:* Who gave you that information? Who?

*Oshungbekun:* Jijó iyà kà wòó. . . Who? If I feed I'll know when I am satisfied because I have the stomach, would you then say I am lying? Be reasonable, man, and know that as you fart in secret, so do people smell it in silence. I know his tricks and I know his ambition. You, go on fighting till you die.

*Ogboriẹfọn:* I will fight! I am a Balogun and I must prove to the world that I am worthy of the title. Others are proving their prowess and I must prove mine to justify my title. Understand that, Oshungbekun, and never again tell me to stop fighting!

*Oshungbekun:* All right. We are already at it. Fight!.

*Ogboriẹfọn:* Well, this is Igbajo, and here we are. Although we still have the Egba and the Ijebu to deal with, and the cunning Ilorin Fulani too, yet, we must push on in this eastern part of our country. If you want to silence a cock, you have to cut deep into its vocal chords while killing it, otherwise, it may crow to your amazement. Therefore, we must push on.

*Osi:* Shouldn't we rest a while?

*Ogboriẹfọn:* I know the body is not made of stone, Osi, but I must warn all of you that there is rest only in the grave. As the pauper runs here and there for sustenance to keep body and soul together, so also do the rich crave more riches, which is the more reason why we shouldn't rest

until we are rested. However, we shall set up a camp here. . .  
You, go and get some bamboo and start erecting shelters  
for us all. I shall go round to see the extent of damages  
done to the town. Alore!

*Alore:* Yes, my Lord. (*Exits.*)

*Ogboriefon:* Come. It is time to spy out the land.

*Otun:* Muso, muso, muso!

*Warriors:* Muso. . . (*They break into a war song as OGBORIE-  
FON leaves with ALORE.*)

Yio tẹ òo

*Will be disgraced!*

Yio tẹ òo

*Will be disgraced!*

Èkìtì tó fojú dìBàdàn

*Any Ekiti who confronts Ibadan*

Yio tẹ òo

*Will be disgraced!*

Yio tẹ òo,

*Will be disgraced!*

Èkìtì tó fojú dÀjàyí

*Any Ekiti who is brazen-faced to Ajayi*

Yio tẹ òo.

*Will be disgraced.*

ACT II:  
TROUBLED NEGOTIATIONS AND  
UNEASY PEACE

Scene 1: Wood's Attempt 1881

*On the left of the stage is the palace of ORE, king of Otun. Upstage left are the EKITIPARAPO WARRIORS, and downstage right are the IBADAN WARRIORS. When lights come onto the palace, the action upstage left and downstage right freeze. The ORE, who is now revealed in a pool of light, sits on a beautiful chair. A WOMAN kneels in front of him. She holds a wooden tray full of food to the ORE and turns her head away. ORE throws the last piece of meat into his mouth and dips his hands into the water bowl which is also on the tray. He washes his hands. An ATTENDANT enters with a beautifully carved ogboni staff in his hand.*

*Attendant: (Prostrates.)* Kabiyesi. One whiteman, by name Wood, is here from Lagos.

*Ore:* Tell him the gate of Otun is open to him. Woman, you may go.

*The WOMAN goes away. ATTENDANT gestures REVEREND WOOD in. WOOD is dressed in a white jacket and britches and a white sun helmet. He removes his hat on entering. ATTENDANT moves behind the ORE. He is followed by a GUARD.*

*Wood:* It is a pleasure to be in your country and in your kingdom of Otun.

*Ore:* You are welcome. Get a seat for the whiteman.

*ATTENDANT brings in a stool for WOOD, who settles down on it.*



*Wood:* Thank you.

*Ore:* And how is Lagos and the big oyinbe?

*Wood:* Lagos is peaceful and the Governor fares well.

*Ore:* Needless to say. A man met dancing outside needn't be asked how fares his family. If his home is not peaceful, he wouldn't be seen dancing in public. Indeed, Lagos is peaceful.

*Wood:* Yes, very peaceful. And we want this peace extended to all Yoruba countries and ask your people to stop this useless tribal feud.

*Ore:* Do you call it useless? Tell me. If a man came to your house and enjoyed your hospitality and you thought he was a true friend, but yet, when you were away, he stole all your belongings, would you entertain him a second time, even if he were pursued like a rogue to your abode by his enemies? A squirrel does not chuckle for fun, Mr Wood, it is either because he sees a snake or because he is in imminent danger from a human. We do not fight without a cause. The Ibadan people came here as friends, but after enjoying our hospitality, they turned against us and ruined our country. Do you then say we are wrong to shake them off? We are rats, my friend, and they are cats. I fear you will find it difficult to make the cat keep peace with the rats.

*Wood:* If God wills it, it will be possible. I have spoken already with their chiefs in Ibadan, and they are willing to make peace with you if you also are ready to compromise.

*Ore:* I cannot give you my word. I leave everything to our war chiefs and fighting men. They are the ones who are ready to shed the last drop of their blood in defence of our country and secure us perfect freedom from the yoke of the Ibadan. If they say they are ready to make peace with the cats, that's all right, but I fear their reply.

*Wood:* With your permission, I shall go to the camp and talk to them.

*Ore:* It is a risk, but if you want to take it, very well, you have my permission.

*Wood:* Thank you.

*Lights go out on Ore's palace. WOOD and the GUARD walk over to the Ekiti camp where, in bright sunlight, EKITI WARRIORS are seated. OGUNMODEDE sees WOOD approaching the camp.*

*Ogunmodede:* Ami, blow the horn.

*AMI blows the horn. WOOD comes into the Ekiti camp. Only OGUNMODEDE of all the warriors rises to meet him.*

*Wood:* I am Wood. I'm glad to be in your camp.

*Ogunmodede:* What do you want?

*Wood:* I am sent by the Administrator of Lagos to talk to you, your General and your men.

*Ogunmodede:* About what?

*Wood:* That the country and people are generally tired of the miserable and obstructive state of things which has done so much mischief, and been productive of no good, but on the contrary, brought devastation, avoidable bloodshed and slavery. . . .

*Ogunmodede:* Wait, white man. What is the meaning of all that?

*Wood:* We want to establish peace for the common good of all.

*Ogunmodede:* Is that so?

*Fabunmi rushes in.*

*Fabunmi:* Oyinbo, why do you come?

*Wood:* To make peace with you and your opponent.

*Fabunmi:* Speak not to me of peace! I am a fighter. In your country, do you not seek the landlord's consent before you lodge in his house? Here we respect our kings. They are responsible governors of the country and it is to them alone you should speak to of peace, for their command is the rule of our existence.

*Wood:* I have spoken already with Ore, the most senior of your kings, and he agreed with me that peace should reign.

*Fabunmi:* He agreed with you,? And the fifteen other Obas also agreed with you? Don't be deceitful, Oyinbo. Here we speak with one voice and that is why we stay united. And we shall not allow those Ibadan ruffians and bloodthirsty fools, who now occupy our territory, to annihilate us.

*Wood:* That, exactly, is what we are trying to prevent. I was at Ibadan and they agreed with me that a stop must be put to this fight between you two.

*Fabunmi:* They have now, have they? It is they who are at war with us and they should be the ones to leave us alone. It is clear we are not engaged in a war of conquest with them, but in a desperate struggle for the freedom of our country from the tyranny of our merciless conquerors.

*Wood:* We want to help you in your struggle if only you will place yourselves in the hands of my Government and bind yourselves to abide by the settlement the Government may make. We are prepared to listen to your own side of the issue, your terms for peace negotiations and your guarantee that when this is settled there will be no further hostilities. If it pleases you, you may name your terms and these will be thrown open to the Ibadan chiefs.

*Ogunmodede:* They are shoemakers and we are shoe wearers, yet they know where the slippers pinch us, but they still make them tighter. They know what we want: freedom!

*Fabunmi:* As I told you, Oyinbo, it is not I who will give you terms for peace negotiations. I have no voice, except that of the governors of our country—out kings.

*Wood:* I understand you and that is why I would take whatever terms you might name today as tentative, subject to ratification by the sixteen elders of your country.

*Fabunmi:* This war will continue, take it from me, for ever, unless the Ibadan leave Ekitiparapo the sole and uncontrolled management of our affairs.

*Warriors:* Yes . . . . !

*Fabunmi:* They should undertake to respect Ekitiparapo territory and make no hostile incursions into it or attack it.

*Warriors:* Fabunmi Abe!

*Fabunmi:* They must, immediately, return those four border towns that belonged to the Ijesa to them: Igbajo, Otan, Ada and Iressi. And in addition, allow Offa to remain as a possession of the Ilorin. Unless and until this is done, it is war!



*Warriors:* War !!!

*Fabunmi:* Tell them to leave us alone! (*Exit*)

*Wood:* Reasonable. Reasonable. Alright, this will be transmitted to the Ibadan chiefs. But meanwhile I shall appreciate your keeping calm and observing at least some days' ceasefire while I talk with them in their camp.

*Ogunmodede:* You cannot discuss our affairs behind our back. You must make our eyes meet. *Abi?*

*Warriors:* True word!

*Ogunmodede:* Tell them, if they really want peace, let them meet us midway between the two camps.

*Wood:* Again, reasonable. Quite reasonable. If that is your wish, it shall be done.

*Wood and the GUARD leave the Ekiti camp while OGUNMODEDE converses with the other warriors. WOOD now enters the Ibadan camp. The lights go out on the Ekiti camp and come up on the Ibadan camp.*

*Ogboriefon:* It was the Ijesa and the Ekiti who invited us here to help them shake off the Fulani who outrageously besieged their country in an effort to seize the whole Yoruba kingdom. We came here, drove the Fulani away for them, yet they are not even grateful. Our stand here is clear: it's like driving a band of rogues off your farm, if you do not stay there to protect your farm from the marauders, they may later return to burn down your farm house. That is exactly what we are doing here and they say we are a discomfort to them. They said our agents, the Ajele, were tyrants, but did they report any of their atrocities to us and we refused to check our men? Yet, alas, they killed them all off in one day.

*Wood:* That is bad.

*Ogboriefon:* Several years ago when we had a rift with the Egba, a united front was formed against us which the Ilorin people foolishly joined. And what had we done to offend them? Igbajo, who refused to join the front, was camped against by the Ekitiparapo and the Ilorin, Igbajo was taken and we had to come to Igbajo's aid. We did not

compel, Igbajo, Otan, Iressi and Ada by force of arms to be our allies, but they chose to continue their allegiance. Again, is Ofa not a Yoruba town? Are they Fulani? It is to make their position easier that they say Ofa belongs to Ilorin. But was Ofa a suburb of Ilorin, was it not theirs by conquest? If she rebel against Ilorin, as the Ekiti rebel against us, why should they claim more right over her than we do over the Ekiti who were ours before? We are only protecting Ofa to maintain our position here, and we do not mean to recall our army there until we are extricated from this position.

*Wood:* I understand you and this shall be transmitted to the Governor. But while this is being done, I should like you to cease fire and decamp, so that we may find it simpler to study your case. The Ekiti have agreed to decamp if you also will do the same.

*Oshungbekun:* It is deceit!

*Wood:* On my word of honour, they are prepared if you also are ready.

*Oshungbekun:* Then let them come and tell that to us, face to face.

*Warriors:* Yes, yes, let them come!

*Wood:* They are waiting. Come with me.

*OSHUNGBEKUN, OSI and MOGAJI follow WOOD. They meet OGUNMODEDE and OLUGBOSUN midway between the two camps.*

*Wood:* The Ibadan chiefs have now agreed to decamp, pending the result of my visit today. I hope you also will go back home to consult with your kings.

*Ogunmodede:* We have nowhere to go. We are in our own country. It is they who invaded us and they should be the ones to go from this place. If they go, no harm will be done them.

*Oshungbekun:* It is a lie. A similar promise was made to us in years gone by and we suffered the loss of our wives and children from their breach of faith. No, we shall not be the first to decamp.

*Ogunmodede:* Is this your territory, Oshungbekun? Say so,

if it is. Several times, did you not draw us away from our vantage ground by your treacherous promises and were we not afterwards overpowered and destroyed? We are the weaker party, Oyinbo, and it would therefore be suicidal on our part to move from our present position while our invaders are camped on our territory. If they do not wish to go, we too are not prepared to leave.

*Wood:* Ibadan, in the name of peace, I charge you to decamp, because you are in their territory.

*Osi:* If they will not leave, we shall remain here, rigid!

*Wood:* Then, it means you are not prepared for any settlement?

*Osi:* We are prepared to settle. But let them go.

*Wood:* But one of you must first take the initiative.

*Olugbosun:* Let the Ibadan leave our land alone! If not . . . war!

OGUNMODEDE and OLUGBOSUN leave. OSI, MOGAJI and OSHUNGBEKUN also leave.

*Wood:* Sooner or later, they will see reason. Come on.

WOOD leaves with the GUARD. *Lights come on over the Ekiti camp.*

*Olugbosun:* Suppose we pretend to leave and then watch them.

*Warriors:* Good talk! Good talk!

*Fabunmi:* enters

*Fabunmi:* Silence! This is not a war of pretence: it is total war!

*Olugbosun:* But for how long shall we remain here?

*Fabunmi:* For ever, if possible. If anyone here is tired of this war, let him return home. The Ilorin warriors have promised to join me and I shall stand alone amongst thousands of Ibadan warriors. I have a deeper interest in this war than anybody else, understand? And I will not allow any set-back to dampen our spirits and cause the collapse of this movement, because, of all Ekiti and Ijesa war chiefs, it was I who took the initiative in throwing off the Ibadan domination and declared war against them.

IBADAN WARRIORS begin to crawl onto the stage with their guns ready to spell doom to the unsuspecting Ekiti warriors.



*Fabunmi:* If the Ibadan ruffians succeed in inflicting heavier calamities upon our country, my name and my people will be subject to everlasting disaffection from all our tribes on account of my presumption. So if there is anyone here who is tired, let him hand me his weapon and go home. Go home, I said, if you are tired! *(Pause)* Yes? Yes? If you are not tired, then salute your leader.

*Warriors:* Long live Balogun Fabunmi! Heeee!

*Fabunmi:* *(Breaks into a song)*

Şeni kẹ maa şe hòò! sa

*Just go on taking orders*

Ẹrúu jiyàn ọràn.

*Slaves do not argue (with their owner).*

Ẹmáa şe hòò! sa

*Go on taking orders.*

*Warriors:* Ẹrúu jiyàn ọràn!

*Slaves do not argue!*

*Fabunmi:* Ẹmáa şe hòò! sa

*Go on taking orders.*

*Warriors:* Ẹrúu jiyàn ọràn!

*Slaves do not argue!*

*Just in time, before the Ibadan warriors open fire on the Ekiti, the THREE IYAMIS fly onto the stage and spread their wings to screen the Ekiti from their enemies. Neither side is aware of the Iyamis' presence. As the EKITI continue to sing and dance, the IBADAN open fire on them. The bullets land on the Iyamis, but do them no harm. The EKITI quickly scatter and lie prostrate in two rows with their guns at the ready. Another round of firing comes across from the Ibadan camp and then there is silence for a while. The IYAMIS fly upstage centre and remain there. Suddenly FABUNMI raises his head.*

*Fabunmi:* Return fire!

*The first row of EKITI WARRIORS return the fire all at once, and immediately start to reload their guns while those in the second row jump over the first row, fall prostrate and shoot. Again, they start reloading their guns while the row now at the rear jump over*

*the front row, fall prostrate and shoot, thereby advancing as THE IBADAN crawl back in retreat. The whole stage is now engulfed in smoke as THE IBADAN drag away their dead and wounded and retreat out of view.*

*Fabunmi: After them!*

*The EKITI WARRIORS pursue the IBADAN leaving OGUNMODEDE with a few of his warriors.*

*Iyami III: Tell us, Fabunmi, what other fate do you want to be the Ibadan's lot?*

*Fabunmi: (Turning to OGUNMODEDE.) Are you asking me? I want all of them dead!*

*Ogunmodede: What did you say?*

*Fabunmi: You asked me a question. I want death to visit their homes, confusion to knock at their gates. Whenever their General says yes, let his boys say no; and whenever the boys say no, let the General insist on his word. Unrest at home, unrest abroad and the battle is won.*

*Iyamis: Your wish is granted. Go on fighting.*

*The IYAMIS chuckle and fly away. Ekiti WARRIORS return with a captive. They throw him at FABUNMI'S feet. They immediately pick him up and hold his hands behind him. FABUNMI slaps him three times on the cheeks.*

*Fabunmi: Take him away!*

*Two warriors take the captive away. A distant drum approaches the camp and a VOICE is heard:*

*Voice: Olóri ogun*

*The Leader of an army*

*Kò gbọdò kẹhìn ogun,*

*Should not be at the rear.*

*Jagunjagun ní m̀bò.*

*It is the warrior that comes.*

*Ògèdèmgbé!*

*Ògèdèmgbé!*

*The Warriors raise a shout of joy and break into a song, backed by the drum.*

*Warriors: Ògèdèngbé . . .*

*Ògèdèngbé!*

*Káàbò*

*Welcome!*

*Şé dáadáa lo dé,*

*Hope you arrive safely,*

*Olóri ogun.*

*Leader of the army,*

*Káàbò*

*Welcome!*

*Şé dáadáa lo dé?*

*Hope you arrive safely?*

*OGEDEMGBE enters with ARIMORO and some WARRIORS.*

*Warriors: Ògèdèngbé!*

*Káàbo!*

*Şé dáadáa lo dé?*

*The drumming subsides and the warriors embrace each other. OGEDEMGBE and FABUNMI also embrace.*

*Fabunmi: I am happy you come. Arimoro, I am happy to see you.*

*Ogedemgbe: I heard of your many courageous deeds and I thank you. Olugbosun, well done. Ogunmodede, I salute you.*

*Ogunmodede: You are welcome.*

*Fabunmi: Warriors, settle down.*

*The warriors relax talking quietly to each other.*

*Ogedemgbe: I learnt that Reverend Wood was here.*

*Fabunmi: He was here to sue for peace, but those ruffians would not leave us alone. They again opened fire on us and were duly replied.*

*Ogedemgbe: Good!*



*Fabunmi:* We are happy to have you lead us once more and use your wide experience to win this war for us.

*Ogedemgbe:* Thank you.

*Fabunmi:* Well, it is you elders who say: a son does not proclaim himself the head of a house when he still has a father living and in good health. You are our father and, before you, I am only a child, inexperienced in the art of war. Therefore, I relinquish to my father the command of the Ekiti army and hope he will accept me as a worthy child.

*Ogedemgbe:* Do no such thing, Fabunmi. A father does not have the right to strip his child of his rights. I am not here to strip you of your rank, I am only here to help in this struggle for freedom. You have been made a General, and so shall you remain till the Almighty recalls you to heaven.

*Fabunmi:* Now, greet the Commander-in-Chief! Muso, muso, muso . . . . . !

*Warriors:* Muso . . . . . !

*The sound of kakakin trumpets and Fulani drums break into the cheering. The warriors look up and again shout for joy. LASEBIKAN rides into the camp on horseback supported by his warriors. He is turbaned and his men wear red skull caps.*

*Ogedemgbe:* Barika de zua, megida Lasebikan!

*A good welcome to you, Captain Lasebikan!*

*Lasebikan:* Seriki, ranka dede!

*May you live long, General!*

*Ogedemgbe:* Come down from that horse. You don't have to remain on horse-back to see the world, the world's at your door treating you to all its miseries and tragedies as one treats an enemy to a poisoned cup of wine.

*LASEBIKAN dismounts and one of his warriors hold his horse in position.*

*Ogedemgbe:* You know Fabunmi, of course.

*Lasebikan:* (Shaking hands with FABUNMI and others.) Ranka dede. May you live long.

*Ogedemgbe:* These are the warriors who have constituted a menace to Ibadan aggression.

*Lasebikan:* Well done!

*Ogunmodede*)

*Olugbosun* ) Welcome!

*Fabunmi* )

*Ogedemgbe:* How fare our fighting men in Offa camp?

*Lasebikan:* They send you greetings.

*Ogedemgbe:* Well, my men. If a man knows your weaknesses he uses them to tantalize you.

*All:* True word.

*Ogedemgbe:* Once the Ibadan know you've joined us, *Lasebikan*, they may take advantage of your absence to harrass your men. And we shouldn't leave your boys at their mercy. Therefore, *Ogunmodede* . . . . .

*Ogunmodede:* Yes, Commander!

*Ogedemgbe:* You will go and hold fort in his absence.

*Ogunmodede:* Wherever we send the eye, it goes. Wherever you send me, instantly will I depart.

*Lasebikan:* You may take my horse.

*Fabunmi:* (*Embracing OGUNMODEDE.*) Good luck, *Ogunmodede*.

*Ogunmodede:* Thank you, *Fabunmi*. (*He mounts the horse.*)

*Ogedemgbe:* You, you, you and you, (*pointing to warriors*) go with him. The spirit of this oneness will guide you all safely. Salute Chief *Kàrà* for me and tell him everything is well with us here.

*Ogunmodede:* More strength to your charms.

*Lasebikan:* Allah protect you.

*OGUNMODEDE rides out of the camp followed by some EKITI WARRIORS.*

*Ogedemgbe:* Well, my people. We are now strengthened here well enough, but power not evenly distributed in the body renders a part of it useless. *Balogun Fabunmi!*

*Fabunmi:* Yes, Commander-in-Chief.

*Ogedemgbe:* You will go with *Arimoro* to *Ile Ife* to defend that cradle of the Yorubas against the invaders, for we

mustn't sleep with our doors open to night marauders.  
Greet the Oni. Kabiyesi, I salute him . . . . . Say goodbye  
to your departing General. Muso, muso, musoooo!

Warriors: Muso!

Fabunmi: (*Shakes hands with OGEDEMGBE and LASEBIKAN.*) Goodbye and good luck. I hope we'll meet again,  
Olugbosun.

Olugbosun: In peace.

FABUNMI leaves followed by ARIMORO and some WARRIORS.

Ogedemgbe: Now, my Ilorin brothers. (ILORIN WARRIORS *fall in line.*) Before we cut a tree, we must first mind how it will fall so that it doesn't fall on our heads. You must, therefore, mind how you fight. We are not the aggressor, but the oppressed. That is why you must fight like one being, otherwise you will lose. One voice, joint action and the war will be won. Lasebikan, please feel free to advise me on how to treat your men and on other matters. A man who opens his mind is ten times better than a man who keeps silent, for it's difficult to assess what's at the back of a silent man's mind, whether good or evil. So, open your mind to me and mine will be open to you.

Lasebikan: Let it be.

Ogedemgbe: Now, warriors! Respect the earth.

(*The warriors touch the earth and then their chests.*) Draw your weapons! And off we go.

The WARRIORS draw their weapons and OGEDEMGBE raises a war song. They march.

Ogedemgbe: Mo ká' gbìgbò mórí igi o.

*I've now trapped Agbigbo birds (the Ibadan) on a tree.*

Warriors: Ogbigbo!

Ogbigbo!

À á wobi ẹyẹ ti a fò,

*We'll see how the birds will escape us,*

Ogbigbo!

Mo ká' gbìgbò mórí igi o,



*I have now trapped aghigbo on a tree,  
Ogbigbo!  
À á wobi cyé ti a fò,  
We'll see how the birds will escape us,  
Ogbigbo!*

*Blackout*

**Scene 2: Latosa's Palace 1884**

*In Ibadan, LATOSA is with his advisers: AJAYI, OSHUNTOKI, FAJIMI and FAJIBI.*

*Latosa: Ajayi!*

*Ajayi: Kabiyesi.*

*Latosa: Oshuntoki!*

*Oshuntoki: Kabiyesi.*

*Latosa: Fajibi!*

*Fajibi: Kablyesi.*

*Latosa: And you, Fajimi.*

*Fajimi: I greet you, I am with you.*

*Latosa: You had better be. I want you all to know that I am in charge of the conduct of this war and my words must hold. I heard that some of you are vexed with me for putting those I can trust in positions of honour. I trust none of you! My children are my clothes and are the only ones I trust, and whoever amongst you is displeased is free to lay down the regalia of his chieftaincy for I will never allow any chief to dictate to me. Never!*

*As they rise and LATOSA is about to go out, Alore runs into the palace.*

*Alore: Kabiyesi.*

*All: Alore!*

*Latosa: You look terrible. You bring bad news?*

*Alore: Our camps are almost in ruins. The Ekiti boys shoot mighty guns at us. Mighty guns! You need to hear their murderous sound, elders of our land. It is the sound of ten elephants roaring at the same time: KIII-RII-JIII!*

KIII-RII-JIII! . . . and ten tents are destroyed just like that. I am sent to tell you this, my General, for we are powerless.

*Latosa:* Are there no more trained men in the camp who could remove this mighty gun from the Ekiti? Have you lost all the men?

*Alore:* The masquerade dances well, my General, but his voluminous costume will not give credit to his fine movements under it. We fought like brave men, but power surpasses power.

*Latosa:* And what is Ajayi Ogboriefon doing to suppress their seeming surpassing power? Has he become a coward who runs at the sight of death?

*Alore:* I am sorry. He is dead.

*Latosa:* Shot?

*Alore:* No. He died of a convulsion, my General.

*Latosa:* A convulsion! How?

*Alore:* We sent someone to you a week ago, he must have been killed on the way. The Ilorin threw bad charms into our camp and many people died of convulsions.

*Latosa:* Those Ilorin fools! We shall deal with them! Go back and tell Oshungbekun that I charge him to take over control of the army and push on. We must fight on.

*Ajayi:* Even when we weep, General, our eyes still retain a clear vision. If a report from the war front says twenty men were killed, know that thousands have gone. And this you know. I would suggest we write to the Oyinbo in Lagos to save our people from these Ekiti boys. We are losing fast, my General. The Egba are gaining the upper hand, so also the Ijebu boys, and the Ikorodu road will not be open to trade. Let us seek the Oyinbo's help for the sake of our children.

*Latosa:* What we should first of all ask ourselves is how they got the guns and who helped them acquire them.

*Alore:* Reports say that their boys in Lagos, Haastrup, Cole, Osifila, Labinjo and others, are the ones behind it. Report further says that many more of such guns are still waiting to be brought to the camp.

*Latosa:* We must prevent them. Ajayi!

*Ajayi:* Yes, General.

*Latosa:* You'll go to Lagos and talk to the Oyinbo. Tell him that many people have tried to settle this war and failed through inefficiency and not from any unwillingness on our part. Tell him to stop the Ekiti from buying guns, because they are prepared to destroy the whole nation. If he wants me to come to Lagos, I shall be ready to meet with him and the Ekiti people.

*Ajayi:* I shall deliver your message.

*Latosa:* And call on Taiwo. Go with whatever present you can name. Tell him that we greet him. Tell him that he is a son we are proud of and he should not forget his home and his people. He should not allow the Ekiti to destroy us all before he comes to our aid. Therefore, we want him to help us get powerful guns like the ones used on us by the Ekiti. But if he cannot get the same type, we shall be contented with any type he can buy for us in haste. But we want guns to win this war. He will be duly rewarded (*Ajayi prostrates and goes out*). Alore, tell Oshungbekun of my effort to get powerful guns and tell him to keep pushing on and not allow the mighty Ekiti guns or the sound to scare him from the camp.

*Alore:* General. (*He goes out.*)

*Latosa:* Now, my people. What shall we do?

*Advisers:* Nothing.

*Sharp blackout.*

## WOOD'S SECOND ATTEMPT 1885

*A room in Lagos with two benches with a table and a chair between them, OGEDEMGBE, FABUNMI and OGUNMODEDE are seated on one of the benches. REVEREND WOOD is sweating profusely as he walks up and down in front of the Union Jack which is in one corner of the room. He wipes his face with his handkerchief from time to time. The Ekiti war chiefs are also*



*restless. Suddenly OGEDEMGBE springs up from the bench, and the two others rise with him.*

*Ogedemgbe:* It's a trick! It's a trick! I knew it! They will not come. We can wait no longer. Goodbye.

*Wood:* Wait! You mean you are going away after travelling this far?

*Ogedemgbe:* We want peace no more! We cannot allow Latosa to make Ibadan the sole rulers of the country. We've had them in our grip and we cannot come to terms unless the British Government is prepared to send its forces to the interior to drive the Ibadan away and make sure they don't attack us any more. Otherwise, no peace!

*Wood:* When they come, I shall put this to them. They sued for peace, so they should accept your terms.

*Orderly: (Enters and salutes.)* The party from Ibadan.

*Wood:* Send them in quickly.

*Exit ORDERLY. OGEDEMGBE and his men settle down. LATOSA, AJAYI and OSHUNTOKI enter. The ORDERLY who was Wood's Guard to the camps stands guard.*

*Wood:* Welcome, welcome. Sit down, sit down.

*Latosa:* Forgive the delay.

*Wood:* That's alright, I know you have a genuine reason for coming late, but let's not go into that now. Now, gentlemen, welcome to Lagos. His Excellency, the Governor, is very, very happy that you've agreed to put an end to your tribal feud and I hope today will be a decisive day in the history of your country. When last I came to you, remember, you all named your terms for peace negotiations. I shall now read them in your hearing. . . .

*Latosa:* Do not read them. We know them already.

*Wood:* Then I take it you are prepared to continue to talk on the same terms as proposed by the Ekiti confederates last October?

*Latosa:* No!

*Fabunmi: (Leaps up.)* Then, no peace!

*Ogedemgbe:* Let us go.

*Wood:* Excuse me, gentlemen, excuse me.

*Fatunmi:* What do they think they are—gods?

*Latosa:* You'd better watch your tongue!

*Wood:* Excuse me, gentlemen! Sit down all of you, will you?

(*They sit.*) I want you all to understand that we respect your views. Her Majesty also respects your people and your tribe. And whilst Her Majesty's Government is ready to promote by any friendly means the settlement of these long standing dissensions which are the cause of so much bloodshed and misery and which are seriously affecting the prosperity of Lagos, she could not approve any measures involving direct interference with the inland tribes. But if you are unwilling to settle the quarrel amicably, it may be necessary for my Government to arrest the situation by force of arms. That is why I am appealing to you to allow wise counsel to prevail.

*Latosa:* We thank you, Mr Wood. When last you came, we accepted Ekiti terms because of the respect we have for the Governor, and the failure then was due to the Ekiti and not me and my warriors. They've again shown to us their unwillingness to cooperate with the Governor. We cannot surrender to them the four border towns in question. That would be disastrous! The only person then who could settle this fight to our satisfaction would be someone who would drive the Ekiti into our hands so we could take them without firing a shot.

*Fabunmi* )

*Ogedemgbe* ): Hà!

*Ogunmodede*)

*Latosa:* If you say 'hà!' again, your mouth will split in two!

*Ogedemgbe:* You are a fool to say that!

*Oshuntoki:* Withdraw that statement, fast!

*Fabunmi:* You are a fool!

*Wood:* Gentlemen!

*Fabunmi:* Fools!

*Latosa:* You will regret what you've said today, you will!

*Ogedemgbe:* Oyinbo, the rope cannot keep the cow against its will, she only respects its owner by staying put. It's

only because you are here, that I do not deal ruthlessly with these ruffians.

*Latosa:* Listen to the fool.

*Wood:* Gentlemen!

*Ogedemgbe:* Now you see clearly that it is these people without a crown or even a constitution who are prepared to reduce all the crowned heads in the country to nothing!

*Latosa:* We don't care what you say. We cannot be bound by any respect for your useless crowned heads.

*Fabunmi:* Then we'll go.

*The Ekiti party leaves abruptly. Latosa and the Ibadan party rise.*

*Wood:* Excuse me, gentlemen. Latosa. . . .

*Latosa:* Don't call me again. Anything short of what I've said, is war!

*Wood:* For God's sake, how can you make such an unreasonable proposition?

*Latosa:* Ekiti and Ijesa are the slaves of Ibadan and they have no right to make any proposition to us. Let them go back home and prepare for the worst. I shall soon finish dealing with the Egba and the Ijebu, then I'll have time to make the Ekiti and their allies shrink into their shells. Let us go.

*Latosa and his party walk out.*

*Wood:* Jesus Christ, what a party of untutored people I am here to cope with! God!



## BEHOLD THE GUN 1885

*In the Ibadan camp, the IBADAN WARRIORS are seated round the heap of modern guns bought for them. OSHUNGBEKUN is walking round the heap of guns. He spits on them.*

*Oshungbekun:* Guns! Guns! Guns! I told you Latosa is prepared to send us to our death and then make his children chiefs in Ibadan. When I sounded this in your hearing years ago, did you not say my mouth stank? A child who escaped being killed by an elephant has courage, but the man who gave him a gun to confront the elephant is cruel and wants him dead. Your eyes are now open to his tricks. He made me Commander of a dejected, low spirited army in order to silence me, but he's failed for I will not touch these guns nor make any further moves until he himself comes here and proves to us that he is 'very very' interested in winning this war.

*Osi:* But you shouldn't have sent such a rude message to him.

*Oshungbekun:* Shouldn't I have? You make me laugh. So, in your many years of active participation in this war, have you never suspected Latosa as a man craving for an empire. He's got us guns, guns! But I put it to you that a man who runs helter skelter in the woods may not be a lunatic, for, if he is not pursued, he must be after something. Latosa is after a total humiliation of everyone of us here at the front, then he would establish a kingdom for himself and have stooges whom he could influence under him. He must come and teach us how to kill and not be killed. If by noon tomorrow he doesn't arrive, we shall decamp and go home.

*Mogaji:* Good talk, and if there is anyone here who is opposed to what Oshungbekun has said, let him speak out. We are not here because we love to die. We are here only in defence of what is ours, and once that purpose is defeated by an over ambitious General, the last thing the sun does at the close of day is—go home. We sued for peace, but when peace was at hand he rejected the moves because of some

guns he claimed to have purchased in order to prolong the war. Can you imagine a man of his wit thinking for a moment that because a new garment makes a child yearn for an outing, we would grab the guns and plunge into our death? He is wrong! I am telling you now, a man who sees danger ahead and exposes another man's child to it is a wicked character unworthy of any respect. If he doesn't show up before the sun goes down, the moon will be our escort back to the city.

*Warriors:* Good talk!!

*Ogedemgbe:* (Out of view.) FIRE!

*The Ekiti cannon thunders on the Ibadan camp and there are screams and cries of agony. Warriors fall in the midst of thick smoke. The surviving IBADAN WARRIORS retreat, leaving their newly acquired guns behind. EKITI WARRIORS storm the stage and seize the Ibadan guns. OGEDEMGBE and LASEBIKAN push the cannon onto the stage.*

*Ogedemgbe:* Let me see that. (One of his boys gives him an Ibadan gun. He examines it closely.) Lasebikan, have you seen this type before?

*Lasebikan:* Strange guns they are.

*Ogedemgbe:* Go and set them on fire. I have no need for them. I warn you, do not use them. If you do and they explode, you're dead. (The guns are taken away.) You, go and get us some yams. When hunger is out of a man's problems, the problems become easy. We must eat. Others, relax for a while. . . . Did you see that bird? That bird. I am talking to you, Lasebikan.

*Lasebikan:* Forgive me.

*Ogedemgbe:* Don't let your thoughts wander away. It is bad for a warrior. You must let your mind be with you all the time in case of a sudden attack. We all have problems that could force our minds to wander even beyond the clouds. That bird that flew past reminded me of the first time I shed tears since the death of my mother. Even when that scar-faced Ogunmola of Ibadan, made these sharp cuts on my face, it was only blood, and not a drop



of tears flowed from my eyes. My very close friend, Qlowo, died when I least expected it. When I say close, I mean very close. His death was so painful to me that tears flowed from my eyes without me willing it and I wished death had taken me in his stead, but it hadn't come. Perhaps it would have been easy to embrace death if I didn't reject Fabunmi's invitation to arms. Qlowo had many children whom I loved dearly like my own, and in them was my hope of a friendly tie between my family and his. But suddenly, oh, suddenly, the children were pounced upon by the Ibadan warriors and all of them were massacred in cold blood, in spite of my strong protest that they be spared. I lost my head afterwards and I looked back on my many escape bids from Ibadan when I sensed they would force me to carry arms against my town. This made me hate the Ibadan the more. It was there and then I made up my mind to avenge the death of my beloved friends on these ruffians. This, I think, I have done and my heart bleeds for those who have answered the call of death in these wars.

*Lasebikan:* May their souls rest in peace . . . Look! is that the bird?

*Ogedemgbe:* Yes. Something must be looming. Ami, blow the horn. (*AMI blows his horn and the WARRIORS assemble.*) Something is looming in the air. Nature warned us, so scatter and prepare for action.

*The WARRIORS take positions. LASEBIKAN stands by the cannon and OGEDEMGBE looks into the far distance towards the Ibadan camp.*

*Ogedemgbe:* Aaah! I knew it. Latosa! He's here like a bird who smiled when asked: "Let us go down the brook and roast its water for supper." The foolish bird followed, not knowing that when they got to the brook, he would be the one to be roasted . . . Positions!

*OGEDEMGBE and LASEBIKAN roll the cannon back a little and crouch behind it. On the Ibadan side, LATOSA and OSHUNGBEKUN appear with MOGAJI and OSI.*



*Oshungbekun:* Look! You see how terrible things have become. You see how completely we have been defeated.

*Lasebikan:* Shall I fire?

*Ogedemgbe:* No! They would immediately fire if they knew our position. Let's wait until they have all assembled, then many will be brought down with only one shot.

*Oshungbekun:* (*To LATOSA, who has all the while been observing everything around him.*) What will you do now, Latosa? If the death of our sons in this campaign meant nothing to you, how would you account for thousands of our noble men you sent screaming to their graves? What explanation would you give their wives, who have now become widows without knowing it? Those orphans who still do not know it, how would you restrain them from nursing an everlasting grudge against your children's children.? Haa! Latosa, you exposed their fathers to hell fire by your callousness. You are wicked. Wicked!

*Latosa:* (*Breaks down.*) Oh, God! Oh, God! What should I do that Ibadan will not be destroyed? The Ekiti have proved it. They have proved they are mighty. Now I know we have no friends. No friends on earth. Why must this happen to the mighty Ibadan? Why!

*Mogaji:* It is too late to lament, General, it is too late.

*Latosa:* If I had known, I would have compromised with them.

*Oshungbekun:* If you had known . . .

*Latosa:* Yes, I would have recalled you home.

*Oshungbekun:* Now that you know, what next?

*Latosa:* We shall beg the Governor to save us.

*Oshungbekun* )

*Osi* ) : Never!

*Mogaji* )

*Latosa:* Never?

*All:* Never!

*Latosa:* Oh God, deliver me from the conspiracy which the whole country has formed against me!

*Oshungbekun:* You wanted this war won. Now lead us to victory. (*Gives him a gun.*) Take this gun. Take it! Take it and win the war for us, so that your children may rule the

whole world.

*Latosa:* I knew this! I knew the water dragon does not just dance, there is something beneath the depths that drums for it. I knew there was a conspiracy when my people ceased dancing to my tune. For the sake of unity, let there be an end to everything!

*All:* Never!

*Oshungbekun:* We shall fight until every one of us is dead and no single tree is alive in Ibadan.

*Ogedemgbe:* FIRE!

*The cannon shot thunders on the Ibadan. And there is silence in the midst of heavy smoke except the sound of the gun amplified by the echo. When the smoke clears. OSHUNGBEKUN, MOGAJI and OSI are all out of view. LATOSA wriggles in a pool of blood like an earthworm beseiged by black soldier ants. Soon, OSHUNGBEKUN, OSI and MOGAJI come back. They watch LATOSA until he dies. Other WARRIORS of the Ibadan come in.*

*Oshungbekun:* We shall pay you one last respect, General: take you home to be buried.

*The warriors pick up Latosa's corpse and break into a dirge as they go out.*

*Ibadan Warriors:* Ó di gbéré

*Now, it's for ever*

Ò dojú àlá oò

*And only in dreams*

Ò dàrinnàkò o!

*Or on a mystery journey!*

*Solo:* Latosa dará ilẹ̀

*Latosa now belongs to the (red) earth*

Ò rọrun alákeji.

*And is gone for ever to heaven.*

*Chorus:* Ó di gbéré,

*Now, it's for ever*

Ò dojú àlá oò,

*And only in dreams*

Ò dárinnàkò o!

*Or on a mystery journey.*

*Solo: Má jòkùn,  
Do not eat the millipede,  
Mà jekòlò,  
Do not eat the earthworm,  
Ohun tí won bá í je lá'jùlé ọ̀run  
It is whatever they eat at the dome heaven  
Ni ọ̀ mọ̀ọ̀ bá wọ̀n jẹ.  
You should eat with them.*

*Chorus: Ó di gbéré . . . etc.  
Now, it's for ever . . . .*

*Ekiti warriors enter.*

*Ogedemgbe: (Exasperated. Oh, I am tired. Ami, blow the horn.*

*Ami blows the horn frantically until darkness falls on the tired warriors.*

## THE ARRIVAL 1886

*Two flags of armistice wave brightly in the cool and calm September morning breeze in a land yearning for peace. The calm atmosphere is broken by the entry of the Ekitiparapo kings: Ore, AJERO, OLOJUDO and DEJI, their followers who drum them in with songs. A cane bench is carried ahead of them by an ATTENDANT, and the KINGS settle down on it. Another ATTENDANT brings in a cane bench and sets it down for the Ibadan chiefs. Drums usher in the Ibadan chiefs: AJAYI, OSHUNTOKI, FAJIBI and FAJINMI. Their eyes are promisingly bright. Immediately the Ibadan chiefs settle down, a deep sounding bugle announces the arrival of GOVERNOR MOLONEY to the meeting. The chiefs rise as the GOVERNOR is carried to the field in a sedan chair by four strong men. The Union Jack is nailed to the sedan chair. The Governor is closely followed by JOHNSON and PHILLIPS. PHILLIPS sets up a camp stool and a camp table and takes down notes of the proceedings.*

*Kings )*

*Chiefs ): Your Excellency!*

*Moloney: Sit down, my friends.*

*Johnson: If it pleases your Excellency, I would like to intro-*



duce the two parties.

*Moloney:* Jolly good.

*Johnson:* On the Ibadan side, we have, Ajayi, the Balogun; Oshuntoki, the Maye; Fajibi, the Abese; Fajinmi, the Agbakin; representing all other war chiefs. And on the Ekiti side, we have His Highness, Ore, the Otun King; Ajero, king of Ijero; Olojudo, king of Ido and last but not the least, Deji Ojijiogun of Akure, representing the sixteen kings and war chiefs of the Confederate.

*Moloney:* I am happy to be with you all, and pray that God will direct this meeting. Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the warm reception and kind treatment given to Reverend Johnson and Reverend Charles Phillips who took my message to you. Thanks. I received with joy the submissions you all made. We studied them in Lagos and I would like to let you know our decision which is in the interest of all.

*Ore:* Oyinbo, I take all the wealth of the world to stuff your mouth.

*Moloney:* (To Johnson.) What?

*Johnson:* He wants leave of your Excellency to speak.

*Moloney:* Oh, I see. Go on.

*Ore:* One at a time do we climb the ladder. If we don't we may fall back to its base and that means starting all over again. Therefore, I beg you to wait a little until Kàrà of Ilorin and Derin, the Oni-elect of Ife, arrive because their presence will help this meeting greatly.

*Ajayi:* We cannot agree to that at all. Let us start now. It's their business, not ours, if they are late. We all have business that could have kept us back, but we chose to be here on time. Let us begin!

*Ore:* But you are not even complete.

*Ajayi:* We are all here. We represent others who are not here with us.

*Ore:* Including the Alaafin?

*Ajayi:* Don't bring the Alaafin into this. No one likes his role in this trouble. A trouble-maker must be ignored and not given undue publicity.

*Music ushers in DERIN OF IFE, and Kakakin trumpets announce the arrival of turbaned KÀRÀ OF ILORIN.*

*Moloney:* Welcome, welcome!

*Kàrà:* Pardon the short delay. Ranka dede!

*Kings:* Welcome.

*JOHNSON takes them to their seats and they settle down.*

*Moloney:* Now, my friends. I should like to entreat you to let this meeting be as peaceful as possible so that everyone may go back to his own home in time and in peace.

*Derin:* Your Excellency. As the king-elect of my tribe and their acknowledged head of Ife, the cradle of the Yorubas, I must now give you a short account of our affairs. The Modakẹkẹ people were originally expelled from their native country by the Ilorin people, who then ravaged a large portion of the Yoruba country. They first took refuge at Ipetumodu, an Ife town. But the Ilorin people afterwards brought war to Ipetumodu and they were obliged to seek refuge at Ile Ife. When I say the Ilorin people, I mean the Fulani and Gambari intruders who are now the masters of Ilorin. We received the refugees and stationed them among ourselves. It was our King, Abeweela, who gave to them a separate residence just near the town. When he died Abeweela's slaves soon joined up with the strangers and united with them. When they became numerous and powerful, they began to steal Ife children and sell them into slavery, and in other ways annoyed us.

*Ajayi:* Did we not reconcile the two of you?

*Derin:* Yes, you did.

*Ajayi:* That is what you should have said!

*Derin:* The Ibadan people reconciled us with Modakeke . . .

*Ajayi:* En eh! And they say we are bad people.

*Derin:* . . . and they required us to send out our warriors with them to battle, which we always did. The last expedition on which our warriors went out with them is the present Ekiti war. We had nothing to do with the cause, for we were only

carrying out the agreement we had made with the Ibadan people when we sent out our warriors with them, but . . . .

*Lights go out on the meeting and falls on AMI who runs forward and blows his horn. Two EKITI WARRIORS now dressed in Ibadan uniform are brought in by some WARRIORS with their arms tied behind their backs. OGUNMODEDE and some EKITI WARRIORS rush in at the call of the horn.*

**Ogunmodede:** Stop! Who are these men?

**Ami:** They are Ife chiefs fighting on the Ibadan side.

**Ogunmodede:** Why bring them here? You should have brought down their heads. They are enemies!

**Ami:** They bore no weapons when they ran into us.

**Ogunmodede:** So?

**Ami:** We thought it unwise to harm defenceless men. When questioned, they said they were defecting to our side.

**Fabunmi:** (*Hastens in with a rope and his sword in his hands.*)  
No! They must be burnt alive! Fire-wood!

*FABUNMI throws the rope to his warriors. Two EKITI WARRIORS run off stage. They return with firewood and neatly build it up round the two captives.*

**Captive I:** We sincerely want to be allies . . . .

**Fabunmi:** Keep quiet!

**Ogunmodede:** Let's hear what they have to say.

**Fabunmi:** No! They are spies.

**Ogunmodede:** They may have some useful information to give us.

**Fabunmi:** Never take a woman who deserted her husband seriously. What drove her out of his home will one day drive her out of yours. They must be burnt alive. Get some straw!

**Captive I:** Please, listen to us.

**Ogunmodede:** Let us hear their story.

**Fabunmi:** Nothing they say could prevent me from burning them alive.

**Captive I:** While fighting for the Ibadan people, they sent a detachment of warriors behind our back to destroy our town when our people would not allow them to pass



through life and fall on her neighbours, the Ijesa people. When the news of their wickedness came to us, we were angered and sincerely decided to ally ourselves with you. Our warriors are now scattered all over the mountains waiting to be embraced by you. Please, accept us.

*Fabunmi:* Bring a torch!

*A burning torch is handed over to Fabunmi, but just as he is about to set the straw on fire. ORE'S ATTENDANT comes running down with an Ogboni staff in his hand.*

*Attendant:* Wait! (*FABUNMI holds his hand.*) I bring greetings from our kings.

*Fabunmi:* Quiet! (*FABUNMI takes the staff from the ATTENDANT, and studies it. It is genuine. He gives it back.*) Now, speak.

*Attendant:* (*Pointing to the captives.*) These people are allies and should be thus accepted. That is the message.

*Fabunmi:* (*Enthusiastically to the captives.*) So, you were with our fathers! (*The CAPTIVES nod.*) You should have told me before. Release them! (*The firewood and the straw are removed. The captives' hands unbound.*) Royal Messenger, why did you lag behind?

*Attendant:* They were so desperate and anxious, I couldn't keep up with them.

*Fabunmi:* Next time try and keep with time. It is bad to make *molangidi\** with an innocent man's life. I would have killed them, you know. However, say Kabiyesi to our fathers. Well... (*Pats the TWO CAPTIVES on the back.*) We are brothers. Come with me.

*Captives:* Thank you.

*The lights go out on this scene and fall again on the meeting.*

*Derin:* The Ibadan people are the great disturbers of the world.

*Ibadan Chiefs:* Swallow that abuse!

*Ajayi:* We are no disturbers of the world, and you better warn him to keep his wagging tongue in his mouth.

*Ajero:* You don't talk to a King like that! Your Excellency will now see that our subjection to the Ibadan people

was not our choice because the Ibadan rulers are war chiefs and we are kings.

*Ami and Alore appear outside the meeting.*

*Alore:* I knew it! If they can't go to the field to fight, they want to prove they could fight with words.

*Ami:* That's all they are good for.

*Alore:* Let us sit down.

*They sit down turning their backs on the meeting place.*

*Ajayi:* When the fly menaces an ulcer patient, none sees him then, but the moment the ulcer patient seizes the fly and throws it into his mouth in revenge, it is then the world would cry 'woe!'

*Alore:* As if he's the one the fly menaces and not we the fighting men.

*Ajayi:* You say you are the oppressed but when you massacred thousands of our men years ago, did we not apply restraint until you called us fools? You cannot impress anybody here with your lies. The fowl claims he is toothless, yet he eats corn and consumes stones. If he has teeth would he eat up the whole world? If you are not weak, as you claimed to be to give colour to your lies, you'd have destroyed the whole nation.

*Ore:* Your mouth is sweet, but what you did not realize then is that when a buffalo gets on the elephant's nerves and the elephant keeps silent, he shouldn't be called a coward or a weakling—a single kick could render the buffalo useless.

*Ami:* He will never talk straight. Does he think the white-man understand all that?

*Ore:* You thought you were mighty, but only a fool underestimates a child's strength. If you beat him and he cannot match you in strength, he bites you cruelly.

*Johnson:* My brethren, my brethren! The Governor is impatient. And if this brawl continues, we may not see a successful end of things. So I beg you all to keep calm and let him judge the case.

*Kàrà:* Reverend, I want to make a point, but I will not speak

much.

*Johnson:* Yes, please be brief.

*Kàrà:* Bature. . .

*Moloney:* What's that he called me?

*Kàrà:* Whiteman, we in Ilorin want peace. That is why you should beg the stronger to leave the weaker. The distance from Ilorin to our camp is only one day's journey, but the distance from Ibadan to Offa is six days' journey. This fact alone shows that we, the Ilorin, are the weaker party, fighting only to defend our territory. Please help us beg the Ibadan to leave and I will be thankful, because it is the man who arrests that should be begged and not the one who is arrested.

*Ajayi:* It is very easy to accuse us, and it is very easy to say bad things about us. All we want is an end to the war.

*Alore):* Hun hum! That is what you should have first said.

*Ami )*

*Ajayi:* Please, Oyinbo, if a lazy man is fighting and you save him, you must help him home. And if you buy him a cloth, you must dye it for him. Therefore, we shall be happy if you could ask your armies to see that we leave the camps in peace without any accident.

*Moloney:* If it is necessary, it shall be done.

*Ore:* We do not want to keep you here for long. All I want to say is that if we should scratch the body as much as the yaws make us itch, we'd peel off the delicate part of our skin.

*Kings )*

*Ibadan):* True word.

*Chiefs )*

*Ore:* If the two parties start listing their grievances, you'll only make way for further provocation and that might delay things.

*Ami:* Isn't that what he is doing by not being brief?

*Ore:* We on our side are tired of unending feuds and would suggest you mediate in a way pleasing to both of us. Once the trees are uprooted, their branches will fall off and become dry. If through your mediation we agree to decamp,



our warriors in other camps will go home, since it is what concerns the eye concerns the nose. Do not ask us how we'll inform them so quickly; we know how, for the lion is never taught how to walk before he races after his prey.

*Moloney:* Very good. Well, I would put certain points before you this afternoon and you will sign if you feel at liberty to do so. The Ibadan and the Ekiti, who are the principal parties in the dispute, say they desire peace. I am happy to hear that. With regard to a treaty of peace, friendship and commerce to be concluded between you, I will now explain the main points which would constitute the preliminary treaty to be signed by you later. (*Unfolds a scroll.*) One, the present independence of the Ekiti, as agreed to in the letters of the kings and chiefs, must be maintained.

*Ekiti )*

*Kings):* Good! (*They clap.*)

*Moloney:* Two, there must be mutual respect of each other's territories by the contending parties and no reprisals.

*Alore)*

*Ami ):* Good!

*Moloney:* The boundary line between the respective territories to be recognised, as at present, and with regard to the towns of Otan, Iressi, Ada and Igbajo; those inhabitants who wish can go to the Ekiti, but the towns themselves will remain Ibadan.

*Ami:* (*Leaps up.*) That is partiality! Absolute nonsense! It is war!

*Alore:* Again?

*AMI puts his horn into his mouth to blow, ALORE leaps up and restrains him. They struggle. EKITI CHIEFS rise and leave the meeting in discontent. IBADAN CHIEFS also leave. MOLONEY is confused. He also leaves.*

*Alore:* Please, friend.

*Ami:* Friend! I am not your friend.

*Alore:* But I am yours.

*Ami:* I may tolerate you though, but we shall never again

be one! And leave my horn alone, will you?

*AMI pushes Alore off and ALORE falls on his back. AMI blows the horn frantically.*

## EPILOGUE

### Scene 4: The Exchange

*Lights come up on AMI and ALORE with AMI still blowing his horn frantically. ALORE picks up his gun and points it at AMI. AMI stops blowing and looks at ALORE with surprise.*

*Alore:* I am your friend.

*Ami:* A friend on the battle field? You are an enemy!

*Alore:* The same is true of you, but I bear you no personal grudge, so I regard you as my friend and I yours.

*Ami:* Then, why hold your gun against me and my people?

*Alore:* (*Lowers his gun.*) It is what I am forced here to do, not that I am a born killer. . . Have you some kolanuts to share with me? I have some tobacco to offer if you are a smoker. Do you smoke?

*Ami:* Occasionally, yes.

*Alore:* Then you can keep a little bit of this. (*Offers AMI some tobacco. AMI takes it and pockets it, AMI, in turn, splits a piece of kolanut in two halves and gives one half to ALORE who chews it.*) Thank you. It tastes very good.

*They sit and rest their backs on each other facing their respective camps.*

*Alore:* I am worn out within and outside.

*Ami:* Not half as spent as I am.

*Alore:* The Oyinbo has declared general peace, the war has ended.

*Ami:* The war will never be over, my friend, until the day every man learns to be contented with whatever is destined to be his. But contentment, well, that's only for the dead.

*Alore:* How was life in your camp?



*Ami: (Suspicious.)* Life in my camp? How else but tedious and boring.

*Alore:* This war, which broke out many years ago, I cannot see what advantage it had been to anyone, but bloodshed, separation and neglected land. It is my hope and prayer that the sun will smile on us today with all its everlasting glory and make us say goodbye to arms.

*ALORE throws down his gun. AMI picks up ALORE'S gun and points it at him.*

*Ami:* We may bid arms goodbye today, but there will always be wars, my friend, until the day the cat and the mouse learn to live together as brothers. But I am afraid, that day will never come.

*Cannon booms and the stage is engulfed in smoke. AMI and ALORE run quickly out, each going in the direction of his own camp. The gun continues to boom until darkness marks the end of the drama.*

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THIS play was a University of Ibadan presentation to the 1971 All-Nigeria Festival of the Arts and Culture held in Ibadan. It was performed by the Department of Theatre Arts of the University at the Institute of African Studies Court yard, Monday, December 13th, 1971.





Wale Ogunyemi, born in 1939 at Igbajo in Oyo State is a writer, actor and theatre director. He started with the Orisun Theatre and later joined the University of Ibadan Theatre Arts Company. Presently a Senior Artiste/writer at the Institute of African Studies University of Ibadan and Deputy Project Director of the UNIBADAN MASQUES, he has written several plays for stage and television.

Among his works are THE SCHEME (1967), EŞU ÈLEGBARA (1970), IJAYE WAR (1970), QBALUAYE and AARE AKOGUN a Yoruba adaptation of Shakespeare's Macbeth. His prize-winning plays include THE VOW (Special African Arts Award of the University of California, Los Angeles), WE CAN ALWAYS CREATE (2nd Prize—NBC National Day Playwriting Competition), and THE SIGN OF THE RAINBOW which, apart from winning the BBC African Theatre Award has also been translated into the Finnish and produced by Radio Helsinki.

Wale Ogunyemi is a widely-travelled man who has witnessed and participated in many international arts festivals since his debut at the 1st World Black Arts Festival in Dakar in 1966. He was at the Eugene O'Neil Memorial Theatre, Connecticut, U.S.A. for a two-month writer's workshop, and spent the 1973/74 session on study attachment to the Workshop Theatre of the University of Leeds, England. He has the rare distinction of having at least two of his plays presented by different states at each National Arts Festival since 1971.

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